

speak for you in time a berth in the Jean Bart, and a concession in the New World."

The Vicomte de Harlay walked away, and d'Auban paced for a long time the alleys of the Luxembourg, revolving in his mind the ideas suggested by this conversation. "After so many doubts, so many projects which have ended in nothing, how singular it would be," he said to himself, "if a casual meeting with this scatter-brained friend of mine should end in determining the future course of my life." He had never thought of emigrating to the New World, but when he came to consider it there was much in the proposal which harmonized with his inclinations. The scope it afforded for enterprise and individual exertion was congenial to his temper of mind. Above all, it was something definite to look to, and only those who have experienced it know what a relief to some natures is the substitution of a definite prospect for a wearying uncertainty. In the evening of that day he called at one of the few houses at which he visited—that of M. d'Orgeville. He was distantly related to this gentleman, who held a high position amongst what was called the parliamentary nobility. His wife received every night a chosen number of friends, men of learning and of letters, members of the *haute magistrature*, dignitaries of the Church, and women gifted with the talents for conversation, which the ladies of that epoch so often possessed, frequented the salon of the Hotel d'Orgeville, and formed a society little inferior in agreeableness to the most celebrated circles of that day.

Does it not often happen, unaccountably often, that when the mind is full of a particular subject, what we read or what we hear tallies so strangely with what has occupied us, that it seems as if a mysterious answer were given to our secret thoughts? When d'Auban took his place that evening in the circle which surrounded the mistress of the house, he almost started with surprise at hearing M. de Mesme, a distinguished lawyer and scholar say:

"I maintain that only two sorts of persons go to America, at least to Louisiana—adventurers and missionaries: you would not find in the whole colony a man who is not either an official, a priest, or a soldier."

"A sweeping assertion indeed," observed Madame d'Orgeville. "Can no one here

bring forward an instance to the contrary?"

"The Vicomte de Harlay has turned concessionist, and is about to sail for New Orleans. In which of the classes he has mentioned would M. de Mesme include him?" This was said by a young man who was sitting next to d'Auban.

"Exceptions prove the rule. M. de Harlay's eccentricities are so well known that they baffle all calculation."

"For my part said M. de Orgeville. "I cannot understand why men of character and ability do not take more interest in these new colonies, and that the objects of a settler in that distant part of the world should not be considered worthy the attention of persons who have at heart not only the making of money, but also the advancement of civilization."

"Civilization," ejaculated M. de Mesme, with a sarcastic smile. "What a glorious idea the natives must conceive of our civilization from the specimens we send them from France!"

"Surely," exclaimed young Blanmenil, d'Auban's neighbor, "M. Perrier, M. d'Artagnan, the Pere Saoel and his companions, are not contemptible specimens of French merit?"

"Officials, soldiers, priests, every one of them," retorted M. de Mesme.

"What I have not yet heard of is a concessionist a planter, an *habitant* who is not a mere speculator or a needy adventurer. I appeal to you, M. Maret. Does not your brother write that the conversion of the Indians would be comparatively easy did not the colonists, by their selfish grasping conduct and the scandal of their immoral lives, throw the greatest obstacles in the way of the missionaries? Did he not add that a few honest intelligent laymen would prove most useful auxiliaries in evangelizing the natives?"

"Your memory is faithful, M. de Mesme. I cannot deny that you quote correctly my brother's words. But his letters do not quite bear out your sweeping condemnation of the French settlers. If I remember rightly, he speaks in the highest terms of M. Koli and M. de Buisson."

"Is it the Pere Maret that Monsieur is speaking of?" asked d'Auban of Madame d'Orgeville.

"Yes, he is his brother, and the missionary priest at St. Francois des Illinois. M. Maret is Monsigneur le Prince de Conde's private secretary. Let me intro-