

float, not to the Atlantic or the Pacific, but to the Gulf of Mexico. <

Instigated by this success, and impelled by a desire to connect by a great route the two chief portals of the continent, the Gulfs of St. Lawrence and Mexico, La Salle entered upon his scheme of developing the great valley. In a few years he succeeded in erecting his emblems of occupation on one of the deltas at the mouth of the great river. It had taken nearly a hundred and fifty years to complete the cordon since Cartier had raised his cross at Gaspé. To give something like detail to these claims, Duluth had also announced possession among the Sioux, and Hennepin had followed the reaches of the Upper Mississippi.

Meanwhile the English were preparing for the inevitable invasion. They began by treating with the Iroquois for mutual advantages; and as those confederates drove their enemies along the southern shores of Lake Erie, and even pushed them beyond Lake Michigan, there were English traders from Albany and the East to follow not far in their rear. The conflict which the French had sustained with the Iroquois along the St. Lawrence, they now found they must repeat on the Illinois and the Mississippi.

Ever since La Salle had closed the Mississippi to the Spaniards by his visit to the deltas, it had been the purpose of the French to patrol, as it were, the entire line of transit from the Gulf to the Sault, with fortified posts at salient points; and later by con-