

the St. Lawrence and Mississippi. In the valley of the Mississippi alone, the loveliest, richest and most wonderful on earth, they gave France what, had she known how to use it, would have made her the mightiest and happiest of nations. No other river on earth traverses like the Mississippi every variety of climate, no other valley is so evenly watered, so rich in gold, silver, lead, iron, and coal; none has a more fertile soil, scenery more grand and picturesque, none greater advantages for commerce.

Yet France overlooked all this. Even La Salle, who followed Marquette and Joliet, aristocrat trying to be a merchant, courtier aspiring to rule, eager for a title, but with no idea of founding a state, with the whole valley of the Mississippi in his hand—this man left it to land in Texas and waste men and time, and finally life, in a vain attempt to reach and rob the mines of Santa Barbara, like a buccaneer.

Looking back at the early history of this continent, we can only wonder at the utter lack of all wisdom evinced by European governments in their American affairs. They never understood the value of this country; they never understood colonization or its principles. Not an English statesman was a statesman for America; not one in France. The wisdom of England's great philosopher, when tested on an American state, was folly. It is strange, and yet it is true, that the only Englishman who seems to have formed any idea of the future greatness of America, who attempted to increase it, bind all the colonies into one great state, and wrest from France the sway which impeded English expansion, was the sovereign who of all others is pointed at as a man of incapacity, James II., the last of the Stuarts.

The explorers of the Mississippi, in laying that valley at the feet of Louis XIV., might have said: "Another *Jacquerie* is at hand. Your people, wasted by long wars, are doubly wasted by the prevailing extravagance and licentiousness of the upper classes. France cannot support her children. Create a new France in this glorious part of America. See what has prospered there and what has failed. Only communities bound by some vital tie thrive and succeed, while chance emigration, where whole families do not go together with