

**F**RANCE—*In the old world and in the new!*

*The France of romance and glory under Henry of Navarre; of pride and glitter under Louis XIV, in whose reign was builded, under the silver lilies, that empire—Louisiana—in the vague, dim valley of the Mississippi across the sea: these are the scenes wherein this drama shall be played. Through these times shall run the tale which follows. Times when a man's good sword was ever his truest friend, when he who fought best commanded most respect. It was the era of lusty men—the weak went to the wall.*

*King and courtier; soldier and diplomat; lass and lady; these are the people with whom this story deals. If, therefore, you find brave fighting and swords hanging too loosely in their sheaths; if honor clings round an empty shadow and the women seem more fair than honest, I pray you remember when these things did happen, who were the actors, and the stage whereon they played.*

THE AUTHOR.