

of its founder, is, that there is not for a great distance a finer, more elevated, or healthier position*. New Orleans, on the left bank of the Mississippi, nearly one hundred miles from its mouth, stands on an island formed by the lake Pontchastrain and the Iberville river. The houses, built above eight feet below the level of the river, are only defended by art from the periodical inundations.

Iberville appears to be the first, who twice ascended the Mississippi, with some ships granted to him by Louis XIV. La Salle, who some years before had sailed down it, had, on his return to France, obtained from the government a small squadron, with which he endeavoured to revisit the mouth of this river; but driven by winds, often very violent in the gulf of Mexico, he landed at a considerable distance to the west, where, after suffering fatigues and hardships, he miserably perished by the hands of the savages, who were excited to this act by some of his subaltern officers. Better informed or more fortunate, Iberville left some adventurers on the banks of the Mississippi, supplied them with provisions, clothes, and some trinkets necessary for trading with the Indians, and returned to France. On the report made by him to Louis XIV. of the wealth of this new discovered country, the beauty of its situation, and the advantages which it promised, the king granted him fresh assistance. Many adventurers joined him to settle in these countries, and the government sent there some thieves and robbers, who were happy to escape by exile the punishments they deserved.

On his return to the Mississippi, Iberville found the men that he had left there in the most deplorable condition. Some had perished by the savages, some by reptiles with which this country abounds, and others by the excessive heat of the climate. Those that survived had constructed cabins, which they surrounded by stakes, to defend them from the incursions of their enemies. His return inspired them with fresh hope and courage. He treated with the neighbouring nations, made them presents, and obtained from them a promise that his countrymen should not be molested in their settlement, to which he gave the name of New Orleans: but his premature death put an end to his labours. Disturbances arose in the colony; jealousies gave birth to parties, animosities, and disorganization. Instead of pursuing the necessary labours, each busied himself in planning modes of injuring his neighbour. Things were in this deplorable

* If higher, it would be too distant from the sea; if lower, subject to inundations.