

intimate knowledge of the subject, and among them we find that intelligent statesman, the Count de Vergennes, in a work, entitled an *Historical and Political Memoir of Louisiana*, where, he says, it is bounded by Florida on the east, and by Mexico on the west. The same extent is assigned to it by Don Antonio de Alcedo, an officer of high rank in the service of Spain, entitled "*Diccionario Geografico Historico de las Indias Occidentales o America*." Don Thomas Lopez, geographer to the king of Spain, in a map published in 1762, is of the same opinion, which is supported by the opinion of L'Isle, of the Royal Academy of Paris, in the year 1782.

Upon the testimony of so many respectable writers, many of whom in the employment of both France and Spain, not to mention the authority of Du Pratz, it is believed the United States may with safety rely, they having, by the treaty of Paris of 1803, become possessed of the French title. If, however, there exists any obscurity in the boundary of that province, Spain, with whom it is supposed the title conflicts, has no right to claim any benefit arising from it, as all the writers and geographers, above referred to, agree in fixing Mexico, New Spain, the Rio Grande del Norte, and the mountains of Mexico, as the true boundary anterior to the treaty of 1763. If, she, then, by treaty, obtained from France that country, with these limits, as ascertained by France, and different ones not being stipulated for by her, she cannot now, with any shadow of justice, propose others. Moreover, Spain, by the treaty of St. Ildefonso, retroceded this same country to France, with the same extent of boundary it had when originally in her possession, thereby confirming to France, without doubt, all she originally claimed, particularly, as no notice is then taken of the invalidity of the original French title to the full extent of their claim; at all events, it is believed, if there was difficulty in regard to it, during this last transfer would have been the time to adjust it; or, by the law of nations it is thought, as well as candor and good faith, she has not, or ought not, to be permitted to insist upon other boundaries. That law, in one place, declares, that "if the party making them (meaning grants or cessions) fails to express himself clearly and plainly, it is the worse for him: he cannot be allowed to introduce, subsequently, restrictions which he has not expressed."

It is proper, before this part of the subject is passed over, to remark, that, from the examination of the best records of the times, from the discovery of America until the year 1763, the bull of the Pope rather gave a title to the country, the coast of which had been examined by the Spaniards, those confirmed beyond the participation of other nations the hemisphere west of the Azores; but, where an extensive coast had been discovered by them, and no settlement attempted previous to 1763, that coast, and its extended interior, has been considered the property of the nation so discovering it, or discovering the interior; the unoccupied coasts become a part.

Great Britain, as was her interest, maintained for a long time the old notion of a right to grant by charter all the countries from sea to