

ing what seemed the best, stored it in their vessel as a precious commodity. With this and good store of beaver-skins, Le Sueur now began his return voyage for Louisiana, leaving a Canadian named D'Éraque and twelve men to keep the fort till he should come back to reclaim it, promising to send him a canoe-load of ammunition from the Illinois. But the canoe was wrecked, and D'Éraque, discouraged, abandoned Fort l'Huillier, and followed his commander down the Mississippi.¹

Le Sueur, with no authority from government, had opened relations of trade with the wild Sioux of the Plains, whose westward range stretched to the Black Hills, and perhaps to the Rocky Mountains. He reached the settlements of Louisiana in safety, and sailed for France with four thousand pounds of his worthless blue earth.² Repairing at once to Versailles, he begged for help to continue his enterprise. His petition seems to have been granted. After long delay, he sailed again for Louisiana, fell ill on the voyage, and died soon after landing.³

Before 1700, the year when Le Sueur visited the St. Peter, little or nothing was known of the country west of the Mississippi, except from the report of

¹ In 1702 the geographer De l'Isle made a remarkable MS. map entitled *Carte de la Rivière du Mississippi, dressée sur les Mémoires de M. Le Sueur*.

² According to the geologist Featherstonhaugh, who examined the locality, this earth owes its color to a bluish-green silicate of iron.

³ Besides the long and circumstantial *Relation de Penecant*, an account of the earlier part of La Sueur's voyage up the Mississippi is contained in the *Mémoire du Chevalier de Beaurain*, which, with