

This river, the navigation of which is as uninterrupted as that of the Mississippi, will afford an easy passage to the Owini-pike. Between 105 and 110° west long. and 43 and 45° north lat. at a little distance from the Missouri, is the river Pabinac, which has an opening into the upper part of the Red River, which latter opens a direct communication with the Owini-pike. A staple situated on the nearest part of the Missouri, would be sufficient to insure a communication with the river Pabinac; boats might there be built, and the merchandize would thus reach its destination with the greatest quickness. This staple would also serve to facilitate discoveries to the south-west of the Missouri, which would be of the first importance to commerce.

CHAP. XX.

LOUISIANA CONSIDERED IN A POLITICAL VIEW.—
NECESSITY OF A LARGE COLONY FOR FRANCE.—DEPARTURE FROM NEW ORELANS.—FORT PLAQUEMINE,
BUILT BY M. D. CARONDELET.—FORT BOURBON.—
BALISE.—PILOT MAJOR.—EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGE.

IT is difficult to conceive why Spain, in possession of both banks of the Mississippi, from the mouth of the Ohio, should determine to give up one to the United States without being obliged by necessity, the only motive that could excuse the cession of so important an advantage. In vain is advanced the impossibility of defending such an extensive territory: if this were sufficient reason, she ought also to have abandoned Louisiana and a great part of her other possessions in America, which are without means of defence, and are only secure on account of the weakness of the surrounding nations. No one is ignorant that the invasion of a country is attended by hostilities, to which the United States neither ought nor could have exposed themselves at the moment when Spain shewed this impolitic liberality.

The Spanish government can only be recompensed for the voluntary abandonment which was made of the right bank as far as the 32° of N. L. by the gratitude and attachment of her neighbours. But what is the gratitude of nations? A vague sentiment, which the slightest motive of interest occasions to vanish; a painful yoke, which is continually endeavoured to be cast off, and which it is often advantageous to break even at the expence of justice. It is a fact but too well proved, that policy and virtue cannot exist together; and that every thing is subordinate to the respective strength of nations, or the caprices of those that govern them; that a wise government