

THE  
PRESENT STATE

OF THE

*Country and Inhabitants, Europeans and  
Indians,*

OF

**LOUISIANA,**

On the North Continent of *America.*

By an *Officer at New Orleans* to his Friend at *Paris.*

CONTAINING

The Garrisons, Forts and Forces, Price of  
all Manner of Provisions and Liquors, &c. also  
an Account of their drunken lewd Lives, which  
lead them to Excesses of Debauchery and Vil-  
lany.

To which are added,

LETTERS from the Governor of that Province on  
the Trade of the *French* and *English* with the Natives: Also  
Proposals to them to put an End to their Traffick with the  
*English*. Annual Presents to the Savages; a List of the  
Country Goods, and those proper to be sent there, &c.  
Translated from the *French* Originals, taken in the *Golden  
Lion* Prize, *Return*, Matter, by the Hon. Capt. *Aylmer*,  
Commander of His Majesty's Ship the *Portmahon*, and by  
L. M. sent to the *Admiralty Office*.

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A SHORT  
ACCOUNT  
OF  
LOUISIANA.

**M**ONSIEUR *de la Salle*, a Norman, was the first who discovered *Louisiana*, above 50 Years ago. He got thither through *Canada* ; that is, he went down the River *Mississippi* as far as the Gulph of *Mexico*, where it falls into the Ocean. Before him, the *English* had attempted to go up the River ; but when they came to a certain Winding, which forms a Circle, only 7 Leagues below *New Orleans*,

*leans*, they conjectured, upon finding themselves much about the Place from whence they departed the Evening before, that they were got to the End, and could go no further ; whereupon they returned back. From hence this Place is called the *Detour des Anglois*.

BOTH the beginning and ending of that Winding, are, I think, to the East ; so that, in the Space of two or three Hours, one has the Sun both before and behind ; and this it was that deceived the poor *English*. Monsieur *de la Salle*, who came down the *Mississippi* as far as the Gulph, went back the same Way up to *Canada* ; from whence he returned to *France*, and made Application to the King for a Ship, in order to compleat the Discovery of this Country, which was accordingly granted to him. By this  
Means

Means the *Louisiana* belongs to the *French*.

THE Country was found inhabited all along the *Mississippi* by small savage Nations, who had no Manner of Knowledge of the *French*: They might, however, have seen, or heard talk of white Men, because the *English*, and after them the *French*, had discovered, and taken Possession of the Island of *Mobile*, which is called *Fort Condé*. Ten Leagues from thence, upon the Sea Shore, stands *Fort Dauphin*, which is called *Massacre*, because the Savages destroyed and massacred at that Place an infinite Number of the *English*. One hundred Leagues from *Mobile*, going up a River of the same Name, is a Port called *Tombekbé*, where there is a commanding Officer and a Garrison.

ABOVE 100 Leagues from *Mobile*, pursuing the Course of the River of the *Alibamons*, stands *Fort Toulouse*, where there is likewise a commanding Officer and a Garrison.

THESE Countries are inhabited by the *Chicacas*, a savage Nation, against whom we have hitherto stood upon our Guard ; but we are now treating about Peace with them ; they are quitting the Side of the *English*, and *Mr. Vaudreuil* is just gone to *Mobile* to treat with their Chiefs, and to receive their Presents, and give them others ; for these Gentry make Presents *Pilla*, that is, *Gratis*, provided Presents are also made to them. There we have also the *Chaktas*, or Flat-heads, about 5000 Men fit to bear Arms, who are our great Friends, and declared Enemies of the *Chicacas*, whose Friends they will become,

come, if Peace is concluded. They are called *Chaktas*, because their Heads are really flat; occasioned by this, that as soon as they are born, and during their Infancy, their Heads are bound very tight with Bandages, infomuch that they can look up perpendicularly, without lifting up their Heads. I shall slightly pass over these Cantons, because I have not been among them; I only know, that the Way to them is through the Lake of *Ponchartrain*, which lies a League from *New Orleans* to the Northward. It is easy to conclude, that the Nations which the *French* found along the *Mississippi*, did not carry on any Commerce: They dwelt, as they do still, in wooden Cabbins very ill built, and distant enough from each other, and do not appear like Cities or Towns; they call them Villages.

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THE Custom is to travel on the River, it not being possible to make long Journeys by Land, because of the bad Roads, Morasses that must be traversed, thick Forests, and the Difficulty of finding Victuals, tho' wild Oxen, Kids and wild Fowl might be found ; but then, as there could be no other Way of going than on Foot, a Man could not carry a sufficient Quantity of Powder and Shot. It would be more easy for the Savages, who walk very well in the Woods, and esteem it but a small Matter to live several Days without eating ; but they nevertheless perform their Journeys by Water, excepting the *Chicacas*, who are much afraid of it.

WE have an open Trade with the *Spaniards* and *Americans* ; by *Americans*, I mean the Merchants who  
 come

come from St. *Domingo* and *Martini-  
nico* by Sea. There is no going into  
*America* by the River *Mississippi*, the  
Source of which is not discovered ;  
and it is navigated upon no farther  
than from the Sea as high as the Red  
River, 200 Leagues from *New Orle-  
ans*, where one Leaves it to go to  
the *Nanchez* ; and from thence, by  
other Rivers, as far as the *Illinois* ;  
from whence one goes on to *Canada*,  
partly by Land and partly by Water :  
In order to do so, Canoes are made  
of the Bark of Trees, which are bound  
with Twigs, and which two Men  
carry where there is a Foot-way ;  
and you get into them to cross any  
Morasses, Lakes or Bays which inter-  
vene. I have never been this Jour-  
ney, and therefore speak of it only  
from Hear-say.

HERETOFORE we traded with the  
*Spaniards*, to whom we carried proper  
Mer-

Merchandizes, for which they paid in good Piaſtres ; but Monsieur *Vaudreuil* has forbid carrying any more to them ; if they want us, they muſt come to us. It is to be preſumed, that he has ſufficient Reaſons for hindering theſe Voyages.

WE trade at preſent with the *Americans*, to whom, for their Stuffs and Rum, we give Piaſtres, or other Goods, chiefly Peaſe and Beans, which are very rare, eſpecially at *Martinico* ; we alſo ſupply them with Timber for building Ships. To the Merchants who bring Stuffs, Cloth, Wine, Brandy, Liquors, Arms and Meal from *France*, we give, in Exchange, Tobacco, Rice, Mahis, Cotton, Indigo, Skins, Pine-wood, Cyprus, Cedar, Log-wood, Pitch, Tar, or Piaſtres ; Paper Bills having no Currency but in the Colony : We do alſo give them Bills of Exchange : Laſtly, we ſupply

supply the Savages with Fusils, Powder, Shot, Knives, Needles, Razors, Vermillion, Woollen, Ribbons, Blankets, Shirts, blew and red Cloth, and Brandy well mixed with Water ; for which we get Skins of wild Oxen, Kids, Otters, Beavers, Venison, or wild Fowl, and whatever else they can get that pleases. These, also, who come often to *New Orleans* take Paper Notes in Payment.

THE *French* live sociably enough, but the Officers are too free with the Town's People ; and the Town's People that are rich are too proud and lofty ; their Inferiors hardly dare speak to them, and here, as every where else (to make Use of a common Proverb) an upstart Fellow thinks that others are not worthy to look at him. Every one studies his own Profit ; the Poor labour for a Week, and squander in one Day all they have

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