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CHAPTER ~~XX~~ XV.

THE FABRY VIASCO OF 1741 - '42.

After the Mallet brothers' successful journey of 1739 - '40, and quite closely following it, the next Santa Fe expedition attempted was the abortive one known as Fabry's, in 1741 - '42.

The Mallet brothers seem to have shown the journal of their travels to clerk Fabry of the marine service, who, seeing the importance of their discoveries, made an abstract of the journal and submitted it to Governor Bienville and Intendant Salmon*, at the same

Footnote
~~Footnote~~ * "Jean-Baptiste de Bienville, chevalier de l'ordre de Saint-Louis, Gouverneur pour le Roy en la province de la Louisiane; Edme Gathien Salmon, Conseiller du Roy, Commissaire de la Marine, ~~Intendant de la Louisiane~~ Ordonnateur de ladite Province". — ~~de~~ Margry, Orig. Fr., VI, 468. Sieur Salmon was also called "Intendant de la Louisiane : a title corresponding to that of Lord-lieutenant.

time offering his services to go and perfect the discovery.

"There have arrived here in the month of March last", wrote Bienville and Salmon in a letter dated New Orleans, April 30, 1741, "four Canadians returning from Santa Fe, capital of the realm of New Mexico,

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where they have been by land*, without any one having been informed of

Footnote

*It had obviously been hoped that ^{New Mexico} ~~New Mexico~~ could be reached from the Mississippi valley wholly or mainly by river canoe routes.

Notes

design. We have been as surprised as satisfied at this discovery, which may become a very important matter for the colony. The Company of the Indies made great expenditures ~~in~~ with a view to reaching a knowledge of that Spanish country. It had a fort built on the Missouri, where, at the time, it had fifty men in garrison, and it was then calculated to make of it an entrepot for a large commerce. They procured honors and rewards for Sieur de Bourgmont, who had undertaken that discovery and who failed in it, as several others had failed in it before him. What is most singular about it is that the Sieur de La Harpe, who had undertaken it by the Red river and by the Arkansas, did not succeed better. It would seem, however, by the journal of which the abstract is herewith joined, that a branch of this last river descends from the Spanish country and that one can ascend it to within forty leagues of Santa-Fé. It is even probable that there are other branches which approach it much more. However that may be, the journey of the Canadians would have been fruitless and no one would have been able to return to Santa-Fé by their journal, in which the routes are not marked, if we had not found some one capable of returning there with them, not only to survey this route, but further to make all the observations expedient in the country and to lay there the foundations of a commerce which may become extremely important. It is true that this commerce will have some great difficulties owing to the distance of the places; but when it shall be possible to go by water, it will not be more difficult to make there one convoy each year than it is to go to the Illinois, and as for so much of the road as will remain to make by land, the horses, which are in great quantity in that country, will render the transportation of the goods ~~practicable~~ practicable. It will not be impossible, moreover, to engage the Spaniards to come to get them at a place of entrepot, ~~since it~~ since it would appear by one of the letters joined hereto, that the people of Santa-Fé go to trade at the mines of Chihuahua, 200 leagues from their home. ~~It would appear also by this letter*, and the~~

Footnote

*Reference is here made to the letter of Père Sant-Iago de Rebald. Canadians assure ~~me~~, that there are mines known in the vicinity of Santa-Fé. They say, even, that one of them has been shown to them at three quarters of a league from the town, and that, if the Spaniards had a market for the silver, they would ~~soon~~ soon make them of value!

It was to such expectations stimulated by the achievement of the Mallet party, which had in reality discovered two independent and

feasible routes to Santa Fe, that the Governor and Intendant ordered a new expedition, under Sieur André Fabry de la Bruyère, to "perfect" the discovery, by surveying and charting the route by which the Canadians had returned or by finding a better one, more largely boatable.

The instructions to Fabry were quite elaborate. Briefly stated, ~~they~~ they were: To repair, with his detachment and cargo, by the Mississippi and Arkansas river, to a point above the forks of the latter, and then to proceed into the country westward and northwestward as might seem most expedient; to push the exploration as far as the provisions, equipment and strength of his party would permit, making such ~~observations~~ ~~and~~ ~~observations~~ observations on ~~the~~ geography, astronomy and botany, and on the situation and character of the lands traversed, as would enable him to render a good account of them; to estimate and record his routes, observing altitude ~~at intervals~~ at intervals to keep them as correct as possible; to make alliances with any ~~and~~ unknown Indian nations they might meet with, ~~and~~ to urge the chiefs ~~of~~ ~~any~~ ~~Osages,~~ ~~Pawnees~~ and ~~Comanches,~~ who ~~had~~ ~~been~~ ~~went~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~attacked~~ ~~and~~ ~~plundered,~~ ^{at times had} ~~to~~ ~~cease~~ such depredations, in view of the close union between the crowns of France and of Spain; and to ^{peace and} gain the ~~good~~ good will of all these nations by distributing, ^{in the name of the French King,} the presents with which he was charged for that purpose.

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The expedition was equipped at large cost; with provisions for the first part of its journey, (hunting was to be relied on when the buffalo and game country was reached), with men, munitions and merchandise, and with whatever was deemed essential to its success. In its personnel were, besides Sieur Fabry, a sergeant (Champart), a corporal (Alexis Grappe, later for many years commandant at the Post of the Cadodaquids on Red river), five soldiers, ~~and~~ seven voyageurs, or ^{and a negro named Pentalon,} ~~engages,~~ ^{Among the latter,} ~~there~~ were wisely included, the Mallet brothers and Robitaille and Beslot: the four Santa Fe route discoverers, ^{whom Fabry often referred to as "the Canadians",} ~~and~~ ^{also} who were, though under Fabry's command, called his "associates".

Although the services of ^{Sieur} Fabry, ~~was~~ ~~important~~ as those of a ~~an~~ scientific man, ^{were important} to the objects of the expedition, ~~the~~ ~~an~~ ~~error~~ mistake seems to have been made in placing him in command, instead of ^{one of} the ~~senior~~ Mallets, ^{or} ~~one of~~ ~~them,~~ who were seasoned and practical men in such business and exigencies as the leader of such a wilderness expedition ^{in circumstances, with dignity, if at all. The Mallets were to work some of} was sure to be called to deal with. Moreover, they had proved ^{some} ~~these~~ qualities of leadership in their ~~conduct~~ conduct of their previous expedition, having met every emergency, and succeeded, where ~~many~~ ^{many} of their noble predecessors, with far better equipment, had failed. Had ~~the~~ ^{elder Mallet} ~~been~~ ~~given~~ ~~command~~ of this second expedition, with full power to act, within the limits of the sum appropriated for it, Sieur Fabry being ordered with the de-

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tachment in a purely scientific capacity, there ~~was~~^{could} be little doubt that the expedition would have succeeded; so far, at least, as concerns traversing and mapping a practical ~~land~~^{land} route to Santa Fe ~~for there was no navigable waters~~^{of the Mississippi valley to Santa Fe}, and the collection of scientific data; whatever might have been its reception ~~at Santa Fe~~ there by the Viceroy's orders, under jealous Spanish royalty's restrictions. As to this latter, it must be confessed that it seems not unlikely to have ended ~~as it did~~^{had Louis Fabry} led the expedition— with the confiscation of the merchandise, as it did in the case of the Baird-McKnight-Chambers and Chouteau-DeMun expeditions, nearly three quarters of a century later.

Accompanied on the Mississippi by five pirogues of Illinois Indians, Sieur Fabry conducted his expedition up that river and the Arkansas, leaving New Orleans on the last day of October, 1741. The 5th of December found him within four leagues of the main forks of the latter river; and on the 7th he entered the "left", that is, the

Footnote *Left, as it appeared to voyagers ascending the river; but in reality, of course, the right fork of the stream.

Canadian fork, which he named, apparently in ^{or said that of his patron saint} his own honor, "Rivière Saint-André", though this part of the river had been known for 22 years. This was "the river that should ascend to Santa Fe". At "17 leagues" up it he found the mouths of two rivers^{*} which there

Footnote *These were the North fork, or Beaver, and the little South fork ^{of the Canadian}, both of which the Sieurs Mallet had previously noted on their journey down the river.

entered the Canadian, and until reaching this point, he found no difficulty as regards sufficiency of water for navigation; but on the 13th the water failed him, above the later-reached of these two rivers, which he named "South river". Delayed at the latter river for eight days, and on the 21st "a storm having raised the water in that which led to the Spaniards", ^{then} he proceeded until the 25th, when the water again failed. It was only on the 10th of January, 1742, that he could continue his route, and that with great difficulty, ^{the men} being obliged, in some places, to drag the pirogues. On the 15th he reached the mouth of a large creek, above which the river had but six inches of water. In this creek he encamped to await a raise of water; having then made, according to his estimate, 42 leagues ~~up the river~~^{distance up the River Saint-Andrew}. ^{There is a large cove whose mouth is just below the falls, now dry. This cove is now bottom as little river, which enters the} On the 24th there arrived at this camp a party of 35 Osages bound on an expedition against the Mentos.* The ^{chief} ~~Osage~~ having spoken from

*Canadian river in the southwest-
ern corner of the creek Nation*

Footnote

*The Mentos were a tribe of Caddoan and Pawneeian linguistic affinities, and were among those cognate nations, called "Panis" by the Osage and the French, and more specifically "Paniousassa", from their villages, many of them, being on the Arkansas and its branches ^{above} the main forks, within the hunting range of their enemies, the ~~Osages~~^{Osage}, or Osages. The Mentos had once lived on the Arkansas, above its forks, and 26 leagues below a village of "the Black Pawnees". They had ^{been} driven from that river, and had lived for a time on the Canadian, where, in 1742, the remains of their old village of thatched cabins could still be seen. About 1737 or '38, they had removed to the vicinity of the Caddoes, where they were living at the time of Fabry's expedition.

and put out a flag,
across the creek ^{where the Osages had pitched camp,} Fabry and his men went over and held a parley with them. They told him that the Chevalier of Villiers had arrived among the Missouries, and that there were six French traders in their villages; they spoke of the good friendship that had been reestablished between themselves and the French and said that they wished to make no more trouble.

On the morning of the 25th Fabry made them a present of powder, balls, knives, etc. With ~~these~~ this they were not very well contented, desiring some guns also. They were told ^{they could have} ~~there was~~ nothing more. After pouting awhile and holding a consultation among themselves, they sent ^{to a feast} ~~and asked~~ Sieur Fabry and ~~the~~ old Philippe ^{Rabidailla,} ~~one of the Canadians~~ ^{who served as} ~~the~~ interpreter. "There was an explanation, in which they gained nothing. They left about noon, promising that, if they made a ^{and would bring} ~~trip,~~ they would return in six or seven nights ~~with~~ some slaves." Sixteen of them returned February 3rd, "with seven horses, a mule and two scalps; the other ^{Osages} ~~had~~ separated from these in going to the Mentos, and had not been seen since. In their absence Fabry had ~~made~~ ^{fallen} ~~breastwork~~ of timber ^{to be made,} as a covert against surprise, if they should ~~have~~ returned in large numbers. ^{Not to let it appear that he ambushed them,} he told them that he had fortified himself on account of the Black Pawnees, who were roaming in the ~~vicinity~~/neighborhood; they seemed to believe and approve it, but evidenced some uneasiness about his journey, imagining that he sought the Pawnees and Comanches to make alliance with them and trade them some guns. He reassured them, saying that he was going to see the French of the West ^{(Spaniards),} who were our ancient brothers. They asked him if he calculated to ascend the river very high up; he replied, yes, thinking that it would be useless to keep secret from them his journey, ~~at~~ which they would have heard spoken of at the village of the Missouries* and

*The inference is that these Indians were ~~from~~ from the Little ~~Osage~~ Osage village, ~~near~~ near the village of the Missouries, on the Missouri river; rather than from Grand Osage village on Osage river.

moreover they saw with him some Canadians whom ^{they} recognized as having made the former voyage. The chief told him that he ^{ought} ~~could~~ not in the least ^{to} think of ascending this river, which he had seen there more than ten times and which he had always found without water. Sieur Fabry, being scarcely able to doubt the truth of this statement, from the observations which he himself had made, conferred with the four Canadians and the sergeant, on what direction they would have to take, if compelled to leave the river. ^{In substance, he reminded them that no} ~~no~~ snow had fallen that winter, and if the dryness continued, a rise of water could not be counted on in the springtime, ^{in which case the river could not be ascended in boats;} and it seemed best ^{therefore} to choose their course before the departure of the Osages. ~~if the season that precipitation would fall~~ ^{continued the snow}

All agreed as to the great uncertainty of navigating the upper part of the River Saint-Andrew in so dry a season, and they concluded that it would be necessary to trade with the Osages for some horses, with which the greater portion of their effects could be transported. The Osage chief referred the proposed trade to his young men, and then replied that they did not wish to trade their horses, as they were going home.

based on condensed

The preceding account of his experiences with the Osages is ~~from~~ Fabry's journal of the expedition as given in Margry's Origine's Francaises; but from other sources the latter has the following note: "The Sieur Fabry passes in silence that the Osages, on arriving, offered him some horses, which he refused contrary to the advice of his associates, who had offered to pay for them out of their own money, considering these horses, with three of their own^s, as the only means of

Footnote

Where Fabry's party had obtained these three horses does not appear. They may possibly have bought them of Brin-d'amour, a French hunter (from the Post of the Arkansas?) who, that year, had a camp on the Canadian river, about 10 leagues above its mouth; though it does not seem certain whether they found this man until later or not, since no mention is made of him in the narrative of the up-river voyage.

succeeding. It is true that after Sieur Fabry had reflected, he had men run after the horses; but the Osages, offended at the refusals that he had made of them, refused them."

It was now recognized that a pack-train might be absolutely needful, but the horses for it very difficult to obtain.

The first and cardinal error had been committed in not providing for this obviously possible emergency before the expedition started. Arrangements should have been made in advance to have horses sent across from the village of the Cadodaquios on Red river to the Forks of the Arkansas, to await there Fabry's arrival; and had this been done, there would have been no material delay here, and the progress of the expedition to Santa Fe would in all probability have been practically uninterrupted.

Had the Mallets been sufficiently consulted in the ~~planning of the expedition~~ planning of the expedition, it would seem as if ~~some~~ some such precaution as this would certainly have been taken. But the hope of the sailor-built minds of Bisville and Fabry, that a navigable all water or nearly all water route to Santa Fe could be found, seems to have been allowed to so nearly crystallize into belief, ~~as~~ as to lead to the neglect of this important provision; and the result was one awkward delay after another till the end of the enterprise.

Before the departure of the Osages —according to Fabry— and after

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their refusal to trade their horses, a new conference was held by the Frenchmen. The Canadians suggested following the Osage trace, to seek horses from the nation which the Osages had recently raided, Fabry advised against this, as entailing too much risk at a time when that unknown nation had just been struck by hostile parties, and he thought it expedient to wait for a season; that even if many horses should be obtained, they would not leave the river, so long as there was any hope of a rise of ^{its} waters in the springtime, he being constrained by his orders to ascend the river as high as he could. He wanted to wait till ~~the~~ Easter, and there would ~~then~~ be time enough to ~~wait~~ hunt for horses. "This reasoning", says Fabry, "seemed to be approved". But Margry says, "This reasoning was so little approved by the voyageurs that they opposed it until they ~~had~~ ^{had} silence imposed on them by Sieur Fabry, who said that he ~~would no longer~~ wished to follow their ^{counsel} ~~advice~~ about anything". Fabry, however, took the precaution of sending by the Osage chief a letter to the French traders on the Missouri, whom the Osages said they could reach in seven nights, to trade for and bring them some horses, for which he would pay what the Missouries should ask for them; and if two of them would come with some Indians to bring the horses, he would ~~pay~~ ^{give} ~~them~~ 200 francs apiece for their trouble. He would wait for them till the end of February. ^{This precaution, though apparently wise, proved fruitless.}

^{a violent storm} The Osages departed on the 4th; ~~of February~~; on the ~~evening of the~~ 8th ~~a~~ ^{now superseded} from the southeast, with rain and hail, raised the river three feet in the night, but the water was down again by daybreak. Cold weather ~~continued~~ ^{continued} until the 17th, when ~~the weather having~~ ^{the weather} became mild ^{and} the ice broke without causing any considerable rise of the water. A rise of two feet on the 18th, had vanished by evening. From the 19th to the 27th the weather was cloudy but rainless. On the 28th, the river being found a little higher than ordinary, and ^{most} ~~the~~ ~~water~~ having become scarce by so long a stay in that place, putting the men in bad humor, Fabry proposed pulling the canoes to get higher up the river and find buffalo. On the 29th the canoes were reloaded at the mouth of the ^{crack} ~~brook~~ and the ascent of the river was resumed, ~~the~~ the men wading and dragging the canoes after them. In this manner it was possible to make but slow progress. On the 5th of March, an advance of only a little more than six and a half leagues had been ^{in six days} made; and ~~at~~ a place was encountered where there was no water at all, and it became necessary to unload and to provide levers to get the pirogues past it. Busied thus on the ^{6th} ~~6th~~, the 7th found every one tired out, and it was decided to rest at the first place good for hunting. March 8th to 12th ^{brought} the coldest weather of the winter, and the party ~~made no advance~~ ^{made no advance} ~~but~~ ~~was~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~remained~~ ~~in~~ ~~camp~~ discovered in the meantime that the vicinity abounded in bear and fat deer. ~~They accordingly went~~ While