

of the most numerous on the continent, now profess Christianity.¹ 1700.

The labors among the Mascoutins met with less success. The Sieur Juchereau,² a Canadian gentleman, had begun a post at the mouth of the Ohio (Ouabache) River, which empties into the Micissippi, constituting the shortest and most convenient communication between Canada and Louisiana, and a great many of these Indians had settled there. To retain them he had persuaded Father Mermet, one of the Illinois missionaries, to endeavor to gain them to Christ; but that missionary found an indocile tribe, excessively superstitious, despotically ruled by medicine-men. He thought that if he could succeed in converting or in publicly confounding these impostors, he would easily succeed with the multitude, and he undertook one, who adored the bison, which he had taken as his manitou. He put him several questions that embarrassed him; he raised difficulties which he could not meet; at last he forced him to say that the bison was not his god, but the spirit who protects the whole species of those animals, and who dwells under the earth. This avowal was already something gained; but when the missionary sought to use it to bring his adversary to a knowledge of an eternal omnipotent Spirit, who created the world, and whom all men who are the work of his hands, should alone adore, he beheld a man who lost all sense, and spoke nothing but extravagance.

Fruitless mission among the Mascoutins

An epidemic which soon after broke out in this village and carried off a great many Indians, gave Father Mer-

¹ Father James Gravier was there also in 1687. Father Sebastian Rale followed in 1692 (*Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*). In 1693 Gravier resumed his labors and was assisted by Julian Binneteau and Francis Pinet, both of whom died a few years after, and by Gabriel Marest. Gravier, *Relation de la Mission des Illinois*, 1693; *Lettres Edifiantes: Relation de la Mission du Mississippi*, 19-26; *Relation des Affaires du Canada*

1696, &c. pp. 21-34; 43-64. Marquette and Allouez labored among the Kaskaskias; Gravier began his labors among the Peorias near the French fort, and built his chapel in 1693. *Relation*, p. 6.

² I find nothing to enable us to tell which of the Juchereaus this was. Some of the family preceded Juchereau de St. Denys on the Mississippi, so that he is not probably here referred to.