

Letter by Father Mermet, Missionary at Cascaskias, to the Jesuits in Canada.

Among the Cascaskias,
this 2nd of march, 1706.

I WRITE you news concerning the affairs of the Illinois, some of which is good and some bad. It is good from this village, except that they threaten to leave us at the first word. It is bad, as regards both spiritual and temporal matters, among the Illinois of Détroit,—otherwise, the Peoarias,—where Father Gravier nearly lost his life on two occasions, and he is not yet out of danger. It happened thus: In obedience to the menacing orders of Monsieur the Governor, the chiefs appointed one Mantouchensa,—called by the french *Tête d'Ours* ["Bear's Head"],—as being one of the most notable of the tribe, to go to Monsieur the Governor to account for the death of a soldier named la Giroffé, who had been killed by the Illinois. He was accompanied by some other Illinois savages, and went to Michilimakina with Monsieur Desliettes, with the intention of going down to Montréal.¹⁴ But, while at Michillimakina, he saw the frightful presents that the timidity of the French caused them to give to the Outaoïs,—who, as well as the Illinois, were all to be killed, and he at once took very different measures with the Outaoïs.¹⁵ The latter told him that they were more feared at Montréal than was imagined; and that he should act