

the far greater number wandered through the forests until hunger and fatigue terminated their wretched lives." The very soldiers of the garrisons, at one time, were compelled to retreat into the Indian villages, to avoid perishing of hunger.

Bienville, to whose sanguine energy the colony was mainly indebted for its preservation, in 1718, had selected the site of New Orleans, as that of the principal settlement; and the result evinces his foresight and judgment. When, in 1719, the Spaniards retook Pensacola, the same gallant officer, collecting the slender force of French soldiers in Louisiana, in turn expelled them from that settlement; and after a series of protracted hostilities, in which it changed hands three times during five months, retained possession of the disputed territory. It was, however, at the peace of 1721, restored to Spain, its original possessor.

In 1720, twelve hundred more settlers arrived from France; and an order was obtained from the regent, forbidding the transportation of any more convicts to Louisiana. Negro slaves, in considerable numbers, at this time, were imported. A great scarcity of provisions, produced by the arrival of so large a number of new comers, induced riots and great trouble in the colony, and when, not long after, a ship, expected from France with supplies, arrived with fresh crowds of hungry emigrants, the difficulty was increased. Bienville, by dispatching a vessel to St. Domingo for provisions, finally relieved their privations.

In 1722, the explosion of the bubble so artfully blown up by Law was felt in the distant and ill-founded colonies which had been the pretext for its formation; and assistance, even misdirected as it had been, from this source, was cut off. M. Duvergier, appointed by the company almost supreme director of affairs in Louisiana, sought rather the extension of its territory than the improvement of its character or prosperity. Over how vast a surface of country the little settlements of the French were already scattered may be judged from the division of Louisiana, which was made about this time, into nine cantons—those of New Orleans, Biloxi, Mobile, Alibamons, Natchez, Natchitoches, Yazoo, Arkansas, and Illinois, each under a separate judiciary. Bienville was now reinstated in office as "President of the Council," and by his influence the seat of government was fixed at New Orleans, then a small village of two hundred inhabitants. Two years afterwards (1724) the entire population of the colony amounted to five thousand souls. In 1728, Bienville,