

village, he returned as he had come, guiding his way by compass, and reaching the Illinois in November, after extreme hardships.<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1721 two hundred mounted Spaniards, followed by a large body of Comanche warriors, came from New Mexico to attack the French at the Illinois, but were met and routed on the Missouri by tribes of that region.<sup>2</sup> In the next year, Bienville was told that they meant to return, punish those who had defeated them, and establish a post on the river Kansas; whereupon he ordered Boisbriant, commandant at the Illinois, to anticipate them by sending troops to build a French fort at or near the same place. But the West India Company had already sent one Bourgmont on a similar errand, the object being to trade with the Spaniards in time of peace, and stop their incursions in time of war.<sup>3</sup> It was hoped also that, in the interest of trade, peace might be made between the Comanches and the tribes of the Missouri.<sup>4</sup>

Bourgmont was a man of some education, and well acquainted with these tribes, among whom he had

<sup>1</sup> *Relation de Bénard de la Harpe. Autre Relation du même. Du Tisé à Bienville.* Margry, vi. 309, 310, 313.

<sup>2</sup> *Bienville au Conseil de Régence, 20 Juillet, 1721.*

<sup>3</sup> *Instructions au Sieur de Bourgmont, 17 Janvier, 1722.* Margry, vi. 389.

<sup>4</sup> The French had at this time gained a knowledge of the tribes of the Missouri as far up as the Arickaras, who were not, it seems, many days' journey below the Yellowstone, and who told them of "prodigiously high mountains," — evidently the Rocky Mountains. *Mémoire de la Renaudière, 1723.*