

*Thus run my thoughts while I sit here like some decrepit priest, bending over my task, for though but an indifferent clerk I desire to leave this narrative for my children's children.*

*My early life was spent, as my children already know, for the most part in the American Colonies. Of my father I knew little, he being stationed at such remote frontier posts in the savage country that he would not allow my mother and myself to accompany him. So we led a secluded life in the garrison at Quebec. After the news came of his death somewhere out in the wilderness, my brave mother and I were left entirely alone. I was far too young then to realize my loss, and the memory of those peaceful years in America with my patient, accomplished mother remains to me now the very happiest of my life.*

*From her I learned to note and love the beauties of mountain and of stream. The broad blue St. Lawrence and the mighty forests on its banks were a constant source of delight to my childish fancy, and those memories cling to me, ineffaceable even by all these years of war and tumult.*

*When she died I drifted to our newer stations in the south, down the great river, and it is of that last year in Louisiana, while I was yet Captain de Mouret of Bienville's Guards, that I would have my children know.*

*Along the shore of Back Bay, on the southern coast of our Province of Louisiana, the dense marsh grass grows far out into the water, trembling and throbbing with the ebb and flow of every tide.*