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1702. ground, we did not deem it proper to oppose them; but we will see, in the sequel, that this fort was the germ of a contention between us, that lasted two years. Having given all necessary orders, and bade adieu to his officers, M. d'Iberville again took his departure for France in the month of June.

A few days after he had left, M. de Tonty, governor among the *Illinois,* came to *Mobile* with the Canadian merchants, thinking to find M. d'Iberville there. He saluted M. de Bienville, our governor, with whom he remained a long time.

About this time, five of our Frenchmen desired permission from M. de Bienville to go and trade among the *Alibamons,* in order to procure poultry and other provisions, of which we stood in need. They took occasion to set out with ten of that nation who had been trading at the fort, and wished to return home. On the journey, they stopped at a village about five leagues from our fort, where were assembled three different nations, who were engaged in celebrating their feasts; these were the *Mobilians,* the *Thomex,* and the *Nanibas.* They have no temple, but they have a cabin in which they perform their incantations and juggleries, which they designate, in their language, an invocation to their *Great Spirit.*

In the beginning of September, they celebrate a feast, which has a considerable resemblance to that of the ancient Lacedemonians. Upon that day, they whip their children until their backs are covered with blood. The whole village then assemble in their public square. All the children, male and female, are compelled to be present, even those of the most tender age; and,
1702. if the child is sick and unable to be present, the mother is whipped in its stead. When this ceremony is concluded, they dance all night. The chiefs and old men then deliver an exhortation to those whipped, telling them, that this is done to teach them how to support and sustain the misfortunes which may happen to them, should they fall into the hands of their enemies, and to learn them to become good warriors, and to utter no cry, nor even shed a tear when in the midst of the fire into which they may be cast.

Our five Frenchmen, after having witnessed this feast, pursued their route with the ten *Alibamons* until they had ap-

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proached within ten leagues of their village. The Indians requested the French to remain there until they had notified their chief, and that they would return on the morrow. But, whilst they remained there, the savages came stealthily during the night, seized their arms, and killed four of them. The fifth escaped, threw himself into the river, and, while swimming, he was wounded in the shoulder by the blow of a hatchet. After some days he reached the fort, having bound up his wound with the gum exuding from the pine trees. It was this circumstance that gave rise to the war between us and the *Alibamons,* which continued seven years.

M. de Bienville immediately notified the neighboring nations, the *Mobilians*, the *Thomez,* the tribes of the *Forks,* the *Choctaws,* and others, of this treacherous affair, who came to join us to the number of eighteen hundred warriors. On our side, we had seventy Frenchmen fit to bear arms. Our officers were M. M. deBienville, St. Denis, and De Tonty, an ancient
1702. captain from Canada. The *Mobilians* served us as guides. It was in the beginning of September that we all set out together on the march against the *Alibamons,* but the greater portion of the Indians deserted us at the end of four or five days. They were the friends and allies of the Alibamons,* against whom they were leading us to war.

M. de Bienville, on seeing the desertion of the Indians, returned to our fort, and ordered the construction of ten canoes, which, as soon as completed, we received orders to embark in them, both officers and men, placing himself at the head of the expedition. We took our departure, secretly, at night, in order to conceal our numbers from the Indians. At the end of a few days' journey, we arrived ten leagues from the village of the *Alibamons,* near the spot where our four Frenchmen had been killed. We saw their fires upon the river, and, at about double musket-shot distance from this fire, were fourteen canoes, manned by the *Alibamons,* who were out hunting with their families. Towards evening, we ascended the river, and landed

*Mithridates, Vol. III, pp. 292-305; Balbi's "Atlas Ethnographique." Tab. 41, No. 789. The *Mobilians* occupied the territory near the mouth of *Mobile River,* and north of the *Apalachians.* DeSoto found them a formidable enemy.

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on the opposite side. When their fires were extinguished, and they were asleep, M. de Bienville made us advance into the woods by a very bad road, keeping up a steady fire. But we could not see where to direct our aim. I do not know that we killed any of them. We remained masters of their cabins until day-break, when we set fire to them, after taking whatever merchandize we found there, which, toegther with their canoes, we brought to our fort at Mobile, where, upon our return, we
1702. found a chief of the *Chickasaws,* who was waiting for M. de-Bienville, to obtain from him a French lad, whom he desired to take with him to his village, to instruct in the language of his nation. M. de Bienville gave him little St. Michel, aged fourteen years, a son of M. St. Michel, captain of the port of *Rochefort.* He took his boy with him to the nation, together with the presents made to him.

A short time after the return of M. St. Denis to the fort established on the *Mississippi,* he sent word to M. de Bienville that Bayagoulas had been defeated in battle by the *Tensas,* who had burned their villages, and that such of the *Bayagoulas* as had escaped disaster, had taken refuge near his fort, where he had given them a place for the purpose of erecting their cabins.

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The *Natchez* inhabit one of the most beautiful countries in Louisiana. It lies about a league back from the banks of the *Mississippi,* and is embellished with magnificent natural scenery, traversed with hills, covered with a splendid growth of odoriferous trees and plants, and watered with cool and limpid streams. After irrigating the plains, they unite in two branches, which encircle the villages,* and, finally, form a small river (*St. Catherine*), which flows over a gravelly bottom; and, after meandering two leagues through a beautiful and undulating country, falls into the Mississippi. One of the French missionaries, Father Francois Joliet de Montigny**, visited the *Natchez,* to teach them the Catholic religion; but, being unable to make any converts, he afterwards returned to *Quebec.*

All the pleasures of refined society are observed by the great nobles. They have none of the rude manners of the surrounding nations, and possess all the comforts of life. This nation is composed of thirty villages, but the one we visited was the largest, because it contained the dwelling of the *Great Chief,*
1703. whom they called the *Sun,* which means noble. The men and women are well made, and appropriately clothed. The women—among whom are many very beautiful—dress in white linen robes, which extend from their shoulders to their ankles, similar in make to the *Adrienne,* worn by French ladies. They manufacture it from a species of plant,*** and from the inner bark of the young mulberry tree, after the following manner: They place the bark in water, and let it soak during the space of eight

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**Terre Blanche,* or the great white apple village, was situated about one league from the banks of the *Mississippi,* on what is called *Second Creek,* and where the *Great Chief,* beneath bowers rivalling those of Arcadia, held his councils with the surrounding nations, and built a fort, defended by parapets and ditches.

**(Inserted in the book in pencil) He returned to France with Iberville in 1700, 3rd May.

***Probably the *acnida cannibina* (wild hemp) or the linum *virginianum* (wild flax), which grow luxuriantly in Mississippi, from which they spun their thread. They wove sashes, belts, garters, and shot-pouches, decorated with beautiful stripes and checker-work. Some of their manufactures were made in large pieces, on which they would ingeniously paint, or interweave, figures of birds, animals, and plants, and ornament the borders with the feathers of the paroquets and flamingoes, showing their descent from the Mexican (*Aztec*) race.

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days, after which they dry it well in the sun, and then beat it until it is reduced to flax; they afterwards wash it three or four times in lye-water, until it becomes perfectly white. Finally, it is spun and wove ingeniously into cloth, and manufactured into clothing.

The men clothe themselves in deer-skins, from which they make a kind of shirt, or jacket, descending to their knees, and from thence to their ankles; they wear leggins. Their language is softer and better modulated than their neighbors. The dress of the girls is different from that of the women, for they are only clad with a species of skirt, fastened around the waist, after the manner of our French women, who only wear petticoats. The skirts worn by the girls are sewed with fine, white
1704. thread, and only cover their nakedness from their waist down to their knees. They are fastened with two strings, with tassels at the end of each. The front is ornamented with fringe. This garment is worn by the girls until the period of nubility, when they assumed the woman's garment. They are very courteous and obliging, and fond of the French. It was really charming to us to behold them dancing at their feasts, arrayed in their beautiful and highly ornamented skirts, and the women in their neat, white robes. Their heads are enveloped in long, black hair, which fall gracefully around to their waist, and, in many instances, down to their ankles.

Their dances are very graceful. The men dance with the women, and the girls with the boys. The quadrilles are always composed of twenty or thirty persons, with an equal number of boys and girls. It is not permitted to a married man to dance with a girl, nor a boy with a married woman. After having lighted two large torches, cut from some old pine tree, one is placed near the cabin of the chief, and the other on the opposite side of the great square, when, towards sun-down, the master of ceremonies enters, followed by thirty couples, in regular order, who commence the dance at the tap of the drum, and the sound of the voices of the spectators. Each dances, in turn, until midnight, when the married men and women retire, and give place to the young people, who keep up the dance until morning. This dance has a considerable resemblance to our French cotillion, with this difference, that, when a youth has danced

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with the girl at his side, he is permitted to conduct her without the village, into one of the groves on the prairie, where he whispers sweet tales of love, till each grow wearied, they then
1704. return to the village, and continue dancing until daylight.

When an agreement is entered into between two young people, they go together into the woods, and, while the young man is hunting, the young woman constructs a cabin from the boughs and limbs of trees and foliage, and kindles a fire close by. If the young man has killed, in the chase, a buffalo, or deer, he brings one quarter to the cabin, and afterward they live together for the remainder of life. They roast a piece, which they eat for supper, and, upon the morrow, carry the rest to the house of the girl's father and mother in the village, notifying them of their intention; and, at the same time, dividing with them their game. After they dine together, the husband takes his wife to his own cabin, and, from that time, she is prohibited from mingling in the dance with the boys or girls, or having intercourse with any other than her husband. She is obliged to work within doors, and her husband may repudiate her if he thinks her unfaithful, unless she has presented him with a child.

The *Great Chief* orders the feasts, which usually continue eight or ten days. They generally take place when the chief is in want of any provisions, or merchandize, such as flour, bacon, beans, and other things, which are brought and placed at the door of his cabin, upon the last day of the feast. He has jurisdiction over all the villages, and sends his orders to them by two messengers, whom he calls *Ouchil-tichou*. The house of the *Great Chief* is of great extent, and can hold as many as four thousand persons, over whom his power is as absolute as a king. The people are not allowed to approach him too closely,
1704. and must not address him nearer than four paces. His bed is on the right side of his cabin, composed of mats of very fine canes, across which is placed a bolster of feathers. The skins of deer are used for covering it in summer, and those of the bear and buffalo in winter. His wife is the only person who has the right to eat and sleep with him.

When he arises from his bed, his relatives approach, and, with uplifted arms, utter frightful cries; but he does not even deign to notice them. The *Great Chief* of a noble family can

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only marry with a woman of plebeian race; but the children born of this union, whether boys or girls, are noble.

It happened, during our visit, that the *Great Female Sun* died, and we were witnesses of her funeral obsequies, which were of the most tragical character that can be imagined. She was the *Great Sun* in her own right, and, being dead, her husband, who was not of the nobie family, was strangled by her eldest son, so that he might bear her company to the great village whither she had gone. On the outside of the cabin, where she died, they placed all her effects, on a sort of bier, or triumphal car, upon which was placed her body, as well as that of her husband. Afterwards, they brought and placed twelve small children on it, whom they had strangled. These children were brought by their fathers and mothers, by the order of the eldest son of the *Great Female Sun,* who had the right, as her successor, and, as *Great Chief,* to put to death as many persons as he pleased, to honor the funeral of his mother. Fourteen other scaffolds were afterwards erected, and decorated with branches of trees, and paintings upon pieces of linen. On each scaffold they placed one of those they had strangled, to
1704. accompany the deceased to the other world, and these were surrounded by their relatives, dressed in fine, white robes. They then formed a procession. and marched to the great square in front of the *Great Temple,* and commenced to dance. At the end of four days, they began the ceremony of the march of death. The fathers and mothers of the strangled children holding them up in their arms. The eldest of these unfortunate children did not appear to be over three years of age. The fourteen other victims destined to be strangled were also marched in front of the *Great Temple.*

The chiefs and relatives of those who were strangled, with their hair cut off, began their frightful howlings, while those who were destined to die, kept on dancing and marching around the cabin of the deceased, two by two, until it was set on fire. The fathers, who carried their strangled children in their arms, marched four paces apart from each other, and, at the distance of about ten paces, threw them upon the ground before the *Great Temple,* and commenced dancing around them. When they deposited the body of the *Great Female Sun* in the temple, the fourteen victims, who stood before the door of the temple,

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were undressed, and, while seated on the ground, a cord, with a noose, was passed around the necks of each, and a deerskin thrown over their heads. The relatives of the deceased then stood to the right and left of each victim, taking hold of the ends of the cord around their necks, and, at a given signal, they pulled it until their victim was dead.* The bones of the victims
1704. who had been strangled were afterwards deprived of their flesh, and, when dried, were put into baskets, and placed in the temple, considering it an honor and special privilege to have been sacrificed, and placed there with the *Great Female Sun*. This barbarous custom of sacrificing their children to the *Suns* was kept up, in spite of the efforts of the French missionaries to put a stop to it, except that they afterwards obtained their consent to have been baptized before they were strangled.

The female posterity of the *Suns* always enjoy the privileges of their rank. The male and female of the *Suns* (nobility) never inter-marry. Their nobility is different from that in Europe; for, with us, in France, the more ancient it is, the more respect it commands; but here it ceases at the seventh generation. They make it hereditary only in the female line. Their form of government is despotic. The whole nation is divided into nobles and common people, called *stinkards* (*miche-miche quipy*). They each have a language peculiar to themselves—that of the nobles being much purer and more copious.** The *Great Sun* is aboslute master of the lives and property of the whole nation. The houses of the *Suns* are built upon mounds, and are distinguished from each other by their size. The mound upon which the house of the *Great Chief*, or *Sun*, is built, is lager than the rest, and the sides of it are steeper.***

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*This custom of putting persons to death at the funeral of the *Great Sun*, or *Chief*, is described by the historian of DeSoto's expedition in Florida.

**There is no vocabulary of this remarkable people in existence, and not more than a dozen words have been noted by European visitors in their accounts of them.

***The Portuguese Gentleman of Elvas, who wrote the history of the expedition of De Soto in Florida, describes the houses of the Chiefs, likewise built upon mounds of different heights, according to their rank, with porticoes to their doors, and their villages fortified with palisades, or walls of earth, with gateways to go in and out. See First Series of the "Historical Collections of Louisiana," Vol. II, pp. 113-220.

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1704. The temple in the village of the *Great Sun* is about thirty feet high, and forty-eight in circumference, with the walls eight feet thick, and covered with a matting of canes, in which they keep up a perpetual fire. The wood used is of oak, or hickory, stripped of its bark, and eight feet in length. Guards are appointed, alternately, to watch the temple, and keep up the sacred fire; and, if, by accident, the fire should go out, they break the heads of the guards with the wooden clubs they keep in the temple. At each new moon, an offering of bread and flour is made, which is for the use of those who guard it. Every morning and evening, the *Great Sun* and his wife enter it, to worship their idols of wood and stone.

The time allowed us by M. de Bienville to return to the fort having now expired, we thanked the *Natchez* for their kind treatment, and bade them farewell. They filled our canoes with an abundance of provisions for our voyage down the river, and begged us to return again as soon as we could. The first day after our departure from their beautiful country, we encamped at *Baton Rouge*. We stopped, occasionally, to pay visits to the nations, and reached the fort in the beginning of May, where we found the ship *Pelican,* of fifty guns, commanded by M. Ducoudray de Guimont, with provisions for the colony, which had arrived some days before from France. He also brought M. de la Vente, a missionary, four priests, two grey nuns, and twenty-three girls, the first that had come to Louisiana. They were very modest and virtuous and soon found husbands. They were under the care of a priest, named Father Huet, who remained in Louisiana to instruct the Indians in the Catholic faith. A great deal of sickness prevailed during the summer
1704. in the colony, and M. Ducoudray having lost a number of his men, was compelled to select thirty men from the colonists to navigate his ship back to France, with dispatches for the French Government.

On the 27th of October, 1704, a sailing boat arrived from *Pensacola,* with news from the Spaniards, that a great fire had destroyed part of the town, with the request that M. de Bienville would send a vessel to *Vera Cruz,* to inform the Viceroy of it. On the 11th of December, a French brig arrived at *Mobile,* with dispatches from *Havana,* informing M. de Bienville that an English armament was fitting out in *Carolina* to attack *Mobile.*

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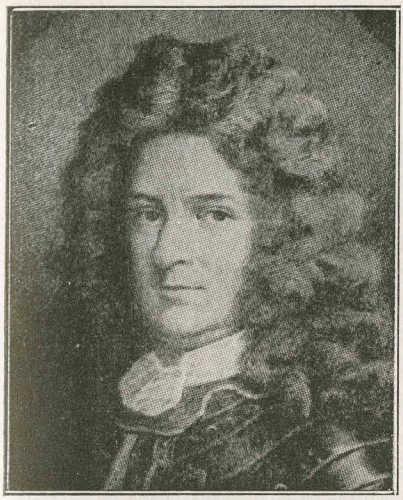
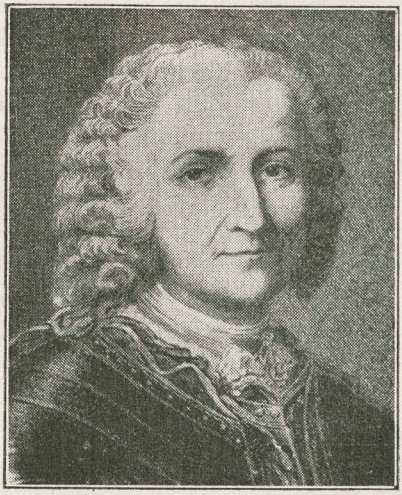


PIERRE LeMOYNE, SIEUR de IBERVILLE, a French Canadian explorer, the first Governor of the Province of Louisiana, was born July 16, 1661 and died in 1706. He joined the French Navy at the age of fourteen and was regarded as the most skillful officer in that navy; was entrusted with the project of establishing trade between France and Mississippi; reached Mobile Bay January 31, 1699, anchoring near Dauphin Island; established a colony at Fort Biloxi and later entered the Mississippi River. He made frequent trips to France, bringing additional soldiers, workmen and supplies and died at sea from yellow fever which he had contracted at Havana, Cuba, but was survived by a wife and children in Paris.

JEAN BAPTISTE LeMOYNE, SIEUR de BIENVILLE, explorer and colonist, was born February 23, 1860, at the family home in Montreal, Canada, and died March 7, 1768, in France. He was the younger brother of Iberville and came with him to Mobile as a mid-shipman in his command, having served previously both in the Army and Navy. After the death of Iberville he succeeded him as Governor of the Province, a position interrupted from time to time through intrigues on the part of rivals for authority, necessitating several visits to France to defend himself against charges preferred by them and always returning with higher honors. He was given the Cross of St. Louis by the king in recognition of his faithful work for king and country and in 1743, after forty-four years of devoted service in the Province which he had assisted in establishing, he returned to Paris, where he died at the age of eighty-eight. Efforts have been made by the Alabama State Department of Archives and History to locate his grave in Montmarte Cemetery, Paris, where he was buried, but without success. He was responsible for the establishment of Mobile, Ala., Biloxi and Natchez, Miss., and New Orleans, La.



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