

and for the numbers of wild oxen and Deer, and all Kinds of fat and excellent Game. The navigation of the Mississippi is very slow and tedious, and very difficult—especially in ascending it. It is also very troublesome on account of the gnats and other insects called Mosquitoes, midges, And black flies; the heavy rains; the excessive Heat; the wretched landing-places,—where one must wade in mud and clay, Often half-way up one's Legs,—and the bad food. Unless one set out with a Canoe half full of provisions, he must expect to fast long; and I find it difficult to believe that our savages up above and in the Illinois Country come here to seek for merchandise from so great a distance, with so many difficulties and so many risks. The Pirogue of the Baiougoulas that we met traveled no more than 3 or 4 leagues a day. They were badly clad for the Season, For they had only half a Deerskin to protect them against the cold. There was even an old woman so destitute that she had only a little moss wherewith to Cover herself. Many old people among these savages have no other clothing. At last, on the 17th of december, I reached fort Mississipi, after 68 Days of navigation in descending the river. This first post is on the South side of the river, 18 leagues from Its mouth; There is neither fort, nor bastion, nor intrenchments, nor redouts,—it consists of only a battery of 6 pieces of Cannon, and of 6 or 8 placed on the edge of the Hill; and of 5 or 6 Cabins detached from one another and roofed with palm-leaves. The Commandant, Monsieur de Bienville, has there a small and very neat house. I observed, on arriving, that the men were commencing to suffer from hunger, and that flour was beginning to fail. This compelled me to