

told that there was on the land an animal called *bête puante*, which spread abroad this offensive odor wherever it might be.⁴⁸ In the evening we camped at the *little Tonicas* in the cane-brake; in the winter, these are set on fire; in the summer, we must cut them down in order to encamp. The savage Village is in the interior; from there to the *great Tonicas* it is ten or twelve leagues by the Mississippi. By land there is only one point or tongue of land which separates the two Villages; formerly a portage was made by crossing the land. This passage is still called *the portage of the Cross*. The river had reached this point, and wholly covered it with high water; this is what we were to do the next day,—that is to say, make the two leagues in order to avoid the ten leagues that we must have made if we had continued our way by the *Mississippi*. We took a Savage from the *little Tonicas* to act as our guide.

On the 10th, then, we entered these woods, this sea, this torrent—for it was all these at once. Our guide, whose language no one understood, spoke to us by signs; some interpreted these in one way, some in another, thus we were going at random. Besides, when any one has entered these woods, he must continue his way or perish; for, if a person should let himself go with the current in order to retreat, this rapid current would infallibly dash the pirogue against a tree and break it into a thousand pieces. But for that, we would have withdrawn from such an unfortunate course, as soon as we had entered upon it. We were obliged constantly to turn the pirogue zigzag so that its point should not strike the trees; sometimes it would be crowded between two trees which did not leave sufficient space for it