

from all points of the compass. From the twenty-ninth to the thirty-first degree of latitude, it did not seem to me wider than the Seine in front of Rouen, but it is infinitely deeper. As one ascends, it becomes wider, but is shallower in proportion. Its length from the North to the South is known to be more than seven hundred leagues. According to the reports of the latest travelers, its source—which is more than three hundred leagues to the North of the Illinois—is formed by the discharge of some lakes and swamps.

Mississippi, in the Illinois language, means “the great river.” It seems to have usurped that name from the Missouri. Before its junction with that river, the Mississippi is of no great size. Its current is slight, while the Missouri is wider, deeper, more rapid, and takes its rise much farther away. Several rivers of considerable size empty into the Mississippi; but the Missouri alone seems to pour into it more water than all these rivers together. Here is the proof of it: the water of most—I might say, of all—of the rivers that fall into the Mississippi is only passably good, and that of several is positively unwholesome; that of the Mississippi itself, above its junction with the Missouri, is not of the best; on the contrary, that of the Missouri is the best water in the world. Now that of the Mississippi, from its junction with the Missouri to the sea, becomes excellent; the water of the Missouri must therefore predominate. The first travelers who came through Canada discovered the Mississippi; that is the reason why the latter has acquired the name of “great,” at the expense of the glory of the other.

Both banks of the Mississippi are bordered, through-