

out nearly the whole of its course, by two strips of dense forests, the depth of which varies more or less from half a league to four leagues. Behind these forests the country is more elevated, and is intersected by plains and groves, wherein the trees are almost as thinly scattered as in our public promenades. This is partly due to the fact that the Savages set fire to the prairies toward the end of the autumn, when the grass is dry; the fire spreads everywhere and destroys most of the young trees. This does not happen in the places nearer the river, because, the land being lower, and consequently more watery, the grass remains green longer, and is less susceptible to the attacks of fire.

The plains and forests contain wild cattle, which are found in herds; deer, elk, and bears; a few tigers; numbers of wolves, which are much smaller than those of Europe, and much less daring; wild-cats; wild turkeys and pheasants; and other animals, less known and of smaller size. This river, with all those that flow into it, as well as the lakes,—of which there are a great number, but which, individually, are quite small in extent,—are the abode of beavers; of a prodigious number of ducks, of three kinds; of teal, bustards, geese, swans, snipe; and of some other aquatic birds, whose names are unknown in Europe, to say nothing of the fish of many kinds in which they abound.

It is only at fifteen leagues above the mouth of the Mississippi that one begins to see the first French settlements, as the land lower down is not habitable. They are situated on both sides of the river as far as the Town. The lands throughout this extent, which is fifteen leagues, are not all occupied; many