

North wind blows, ice forms on the Mississippi sufficiently thick to bear the heaviest carts; but such cold weather does not last long. The winter here is an alternation of severe cold and quite mild weather, according as the winds blow from the North or from the South; and they succeed each other with fair regularity. This alternation is very injurious to the fruit-trees. The weather may be very mild, a little warm even, as early as mid-February; the sap ascends in the trees, which become covered with blossoms; then a wind from the North springs up, and destroys the brightest hopes.

The soil is fertile, and vegetables of all kinds would grow in it almost as well as in France, if they were cultivated with care. Nevertheless wheat, as a rule, yields only from five to eightfold; but it must be observed that the lands are tilled in a very careless manner, and that they have never been manured during the thirty years while they have been cultivated. This poor success in growing wheat is due still more to the heavy fogs and too sudden heats. But, on the other hand, maize—which in France is called Turkish corn—grows marvelously; it yields more than a thousandfold; it is the food of domestic cattle, of the slaves, and of most of the natives of the country, who eat it as a treat. The country produces three times as much food as can be consumed in it. Nowhere is game more abundant; from mid-October to the end of March the people live almost entirely on game, especially on the wild ox and deer.

The horned cattle have multiplied exceedingly; most of them cost nothing, either for care or for food. The working animals graze on a vast common