

## Chapter 16

Ever since my arrival in Louisiana, I had tried to use my time to instruct myself in all which was new to me, and apply myself toward seeking out objects, the discovery of which might be useful to society. I resolved therefore to make a voyage into the interior lands. I left my home in good condition, giving orders to my men, and asking my friends and neighbors to look out for my interests. I readied myself to make a trip into the interior of the province, to get to know the nature of the soil and all its productions, and to make discoveries which no one had spoken of; to find, if it were possible, some things which no one had searched for. After all, one sees nothing without taking the trouble to leave one's home, and one imagines that the land is obliged to anticipate all of man's needs, to present to him all the riches it possesses ready and prepared, as he would want to have them, without buying them with the price of his labor.

I was obligated, before departing, to consult with an old colonist on the location of several rivers, and on some knowledge that I wanted so as to be in greater security at certain points along my route. He referred me, and communicated my plans, to several others, who, like him, had wanted to come on the voyage. He told others about me, because I had not permitted him to join my company, but he gained nothing by revealing my secret, as I remained inflexible, and persisted in my resolution in the face of strong solicitations, that one might consider capable of breaking me. These men no doubt imagined that my fortune would be made by means of this journey, and they would have liked to profit from what I was able to discover, but they were wrong to think that way. I travelled for my instruction and for the utility of the public, but I wanted to be alone so as to act at my convenience, to examine things at my leisure, to go wherever I wished, and to stay for as long as I might judge appropriate. I didn't want any company, not wanting to share with anyone the glory of the knowledge which I would acquire and which I promised myself from this journey. My third reason was the example not of Monsieur de la Salle [who had been murdered by mutinous members of his expedition in Texas in 1687], they would have no good reason to assassinate me, but of Monsieur de St. Denis, who having left Mobile with 25 men, could only take 10 with him, part of the group having abandoned him along the way at Natchitoches. M. de

St. Denis was too prudent to force men to march with him who could only have hurt him, rather than be an advantage. He could have punished them, or forced them to march, but he did neither. What would I have done, therefore, with half a dozen colonists, who might have had their hearts in it when they joined, but who would not have the will to be on their feet all day, to climb, descend, make rafts to cross rivers, sleep on beds of leaves, hunt for their food, and still be ready to go out exploring. They would have been afraid of getting lost, or would have fled at the sight of a wild animal. Frenchmen do not have the patience, nor are they strong enough, to carry all the tools that one needs as well as one's provisions. They would have begged me to return, because they had not found anything novel, after their manner of thinking, they would have been disgusted by eating fresh meat from one hand, and dried meat, in place of bread, from the other. Eventually, not having enough authority over my travelling companions, I would have been forced to retrace my steps, or to travel alone. The first would have been unacceptable, the shame would have destroyed me; the second was impossible.

The Naturals, on the other hand, are indefatigable. They are robust and docile, and they have the strength necessary for hunting. You will see by what follows, the difference between different sorts of companions, and that I had reason to prefer one to the other. With Frenchmen, I would not have been able to do the least of the things that I had proposed.

I therefore pitched upon ten Indians, who were indefatigable, robust, and tractable, and sufficiently skilled in hunting, a qualification necessary on such journeys. I explained to them my whole design; told them, we should avoid passing through any inhabited countries, and would take our journeys through such as were unknown and uninhabited; because I travelled in order to discover what no one before could inform me about. This explication pleased them; and on their part they promised, I should have no reason to be dissatisfied with them. But they objected, they were under apprehensions of losing themselves in countries they did not know. To remove these apprehensions, I shewed them a mariner's compass, which re-

moved all their difficulties, after I had explained to them the manner of using it, in order to avoid losing our way.

We set out in the month of September, which is the best season of the year for beginning a journey in this country: in the first place, because, during the summer, the grass is too high for travelling; whereas in the month of September, the meadows, the grass of which is then dry, are set on fire, and the ground becomes smooth, and easy to walk on: and hence it is, that at this time, clouds of smoke are seen for several days together to extend over a long track of country; sometimes to the extent of between twenty and thirty leagues in length, by two or three leagues in breadth, more or less, according as the wind sets, and is higher or lower. In the second place, this season is the most commodious for travelling over those countries; because, by means of the rain, which ordinarily falls after the grass is burnt, the game spread themselves all over the meadows, and delight to feed on the new grass; which is the reason why travellers more easily find provisions at this time than at any other. What besides facilitates these excursions in Autumn, or in the beginning of Winter, is, that all works in the fields are then at an end, or at least the hurry of them is over.

For the first days of our journey the game was pretty rare, because they shun the neighbourhood of men; if you except the deer, which are spread all over the country, their nature being to roam indifferently up and down; so that at first we were obliged to put up with this fare. We often met with flights of partridges, which the natives cannot kill, because they cannot shoot flying; I killed some for a change. The second day I had a turkey-hen brought to regale me. The discoverer, who killed it, told me, there were a great many in the same place, but that he could do nothing without a dog. I have often heard of a turkey-chace, but never had an opportunity of being

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at one: I went with him and took my dog along with me. On coming to the spot, we soon descried the hens, which ran off with such speed, that the swiftest Indian would lose his labour in attempting to outrun them. My dog soon came up with them, which made them take to their wings, and perch on the next trees; as long as they are not pursued in this manner, they only run, and are soon out of sight. I came near their place of retreat, killed the largest, a second, and my discoverer a third. We might have killed the whole flock; for, while they see any men, they never quit the tree they have once perched on. Shooting scares them not, as they only look at the bird that drops, and set up a timorous cry, as he falls.

Before I proceed, it is proper to say a word concerning my discoverers, or scouts. I had always three of them out, one a-head, and one on each hand of me; commonly distant a league from me, and as much from each other. Their condition of scouts prevented not their carrying each his bed, and provisions for thirty-six hours upon occasion. Though those near my own person were more loaded, I however sent them out, sometimes one, sometimes another, either to a neighbouring mountain or valley: so that I had three or four at least, both on my right and left, who went out to make discoveries a small distance off. I did thus, in order to have nothing to reproach myself with, in point of vigilance, since I had begun to take the trouble of making discoveries.

The next business was, to make ourselves mutually understood, notwithstanding our distance: we agreed, therefore, on certain signals, which are absolutely necessary on such occasions. Every day, at nine in the morning, at noon, and at three in the afternoon, we made a smoke. This signal was the hour marked for making a short halt, in order to know, whether the scouts followed each other, and whether they were nearly at

the distance agreed on. These smokes were made at the hours I mentioned, which are the divisions of the day according to the Indians. They divide their day into four equal parts; the first contains the half of the morning; the second is at noon; the third comprizes the half of the afternoon; and the fourth, the other half of the afternoon to the evening. It was according to this usage our signals were mutually made, by which we regulated our course, and places of rendezvous.

### Chapter 17

We walked for several days without finding anything which engaged my attention or was relevant to the subject of my journey; my curiosity was not at all satisfied. On the other hand, however, this was compensated for by the charming land that we travelled through, which might justly inspire the most gifted of landscape painters. My own imagination was delighted with the sight of the fine countryside, diversified with large and agreeable meadows and adorned with thickets planted by the hand of nature; and interspersed with gentle ridges and dales adorned with woods, which serve as a retreat for the most timorous animals, as the buffalo avoid the thickets, where they will get wet from the abundant dews of this country.

For a long time I had wanted to kill a buffalo with my own hands; they meat of those which my travelling companions killed didn't seem to me as succulent, nor the taste so fine, as I imagined must be the meat of that which I would kill. I declared to all that of the first herd of buffalo that we saw, I would be content to kill just one. A day did not pass without seeing several herds, of which the smallest were in excess of 130 or 150, and therefore I was soon given the occasion to satisfy my wish.

Next morning we espied a herd of upwards of 200. The wind was as I would have wished, it blew towards us from the herd, which is a great advantage in this chase, because if the wind blows from behind one towards the buffalo, they will scent you and flee before you can come within gunshot of them, whereas when the wind blows from the herd towards the hunters, they do not flee until they can distinguish you by sight; and then, what greatly favors your coming very near to them, is that the frizzy hair, which falls between their horns

and over their eyes is so thick, that it greatly obscures their vision. In this manner I approached within gunshot of them, and chose the one which I wanted; and I had almost the temerity to compare myself in this occasion with one of the patriarchs of the Old Testament, when they designated, in the midst of their numerous herds, the bull and the goat which they wanted to sacrifice or to eat for their family's dinner. They took still greater pleasure in this if entertaining guests.

I chose one of the fattest of these buffalo, took aim at the side of the shoulder, and it fell down dead. The naturals who watched me were ready to fire, if I should only wound it lightly, because in the case of such a minor wound, these animals are apt to turn on the hunter who has injured them. When they saw it die from one shot, and all the others take flight, they said to me, laughing, "You have killed a male, how are you to make tallow?" I replied that I had done it on purpose, to teach them the manner of making him good meat, though a male. I caused his belly to be opened quite warm, the entrails to be taken out directly, the hump, tongue, and filets to be cut out, one of the filets to be laid on the coals, and a taste given to all; and they agreed that the meat was juicy, and of an exquisite flavor.

I then took occasion to remonstrate to them, that if, instead of killing the cows, as was always their custom, they killed the bulls, the difference in point of profit would be very considerable: as, for instance, a good commerce with the French in tallow, with which the bulls abound; bull's flesh is far more delicate and tender than cow's; a third advantage is, the selling of the skins at a higher rate, as being much better; in fine, this kind of game, so advantageous to the country, would thereby escape being quite destroyed; whereas, by killing the cows, the breed of these animals is greatly impaired.

I made a soup, that was of an exquisite flavour, but somewhat fat, of the broth boiled from the marrow-bones

of this buffalo, the rest of the broth serving to make maize-gruel, called Sagamity, which to my taste surpassed the best dish in France: the bunch on the back would have graced the table of a prince.

In the route I held; I kept more on the sides of the hills than on the plains. Above some of these sides, or declivities, I found, in some places, little eminences, which lay peeled, or bare, and disclosed a firm and compact clay, or pure matrix, and of the species of that of Lapis Calaminaris. The intelligent in Mineralogy understand what I would be at. The little grass, which grows there, was observed to droop, as also three or four misshapen trees, no bigger than one's leg; one of which I caused to be cut down; when, to my astonishment, I saw it was upwards of sixty years standing. The neighbouring country was fertile, in proportion to its distance from this spot. Near that place we saw game of every kind, and in plenty, and never towards the summit.

We crossed the Mississippi several times upon Cajoux, (rafts, or floats, made of several bundles of canes, laid across each other; a kind of extemporaneous pontoon,) in order to take a view of mountains which had raised my curiosity. I observed, that both sides of the river had their several advantages; but that the West side is better watered; appeared also to be more fruitful both in minerals, and in what relates to agriculture; for which last it seems much more adapted than the East side.

Notwithstanding our precaution to make signals, one of my scouts happened one day to stray, because the weather was foggy; so that he did not return at night to our hut; at which I was very uneasy, and could not sleep; as he was not returned, though the signals of call had been repeated till night closed. About nine the next morning he cast up, telling us he had been in pursuit of a drove of deer, which were led by one that was altogether  
white:

white: but that not being able to come up with them, he picked up, on the side of a hill, some small sharp stones, of which he brought a sample.

These stones I received with pleasure, because I had not yet seen any in all this country, only a hard red free-stone in a cliff on the Mississippi. After carefully examining those which my discoverer brought me, I found they were a gypsum. I took home some pieces, and on my return examined them more attentively; found them to be very clear, transparent, and friable; when calcined, they turned extremely white, and with them I made some factitious marble. This gave me hopes that this country, producing Plaster of Paris, might, besides, have stones for building.

I wanted to see the spot myself: we set out about noon, and travelled for about three leagues before we came to it. I examined the spot, which to me appeared to be a large quarry of Plaster.

As to the white deer above mentioned, I learned from the Indians, that some such were to be met with, though but rarely, and that only in countries not frequented by the hunters.

The wind being set in for rain, we resolved to put ourselves under shelter. The place where the bad weather overtook us was very fit to set up at. On going out to hunt, we discovered at five hundred paces off, in the defile, or narrow pass, a brook of a very clear water, a very commodious watering-place for the buffaloes, which were in great numbers all around us.

My companions soon raised a cabin, well-secured to the North. As we resolved to continue there for eight days at least, they made it so close as to keep out the cold: in the night, I felt nothing of the severity of the North wind, though I lay but lightly covered. My bed consisted of a bear's skin, and two robes or coats of buffalo; the bear skin, with the flesh side undermost, being laid on  
leaves,

leaves, and the pile uppermost by way of straw-bed; one of the buffalo coats folded double by way of feather-bed; one half of the other under me served for a matrafs, and the other over me for a coverlet: three canes, or boughs, bent to a semicircle, one at the head, another in the middle, and a third at the feet, supported a cloth which formed my tetter and curtains, and secured me from the injuries of the air, and the stings of gnats and moskitto's. My Indians had their ordinary hunting and travelling beds, which consist of a deer skin and a buffalo coat, which they always carry with them, when they expect to lie out of their villages. We rested nine days, and regaled ourselves with choice buffalo, turkey, partridge, pheasants, &c.

The discovery I had made of the plaster, put me to look out, during our stay, in all the places round about, for many leagues. I was at last tired of beating about such fine plains, without discovering the least thing, and I had resolved to go far to the North, when at the noon-signal the scout a-head waited to shew me a shining and sharp stone, of the length and size of one's thumb, and as square as a joiner could have made a piece of wood of the same bigness. I imagined it might be rock-crystal; to be assured thereof, I took a large musquet flint in my left hand, presenting its head, or thick end, on which I struck with one of the edges of the crystal, and drew much more fire than with the finest steel: and notwithstanding the many strokes I gave, the piece of crystal was not in the least scratched or streaked.

I examined these stones, and found pieces of different magnitudes, some square, others with six faces, even and smooth like mirrors, highly transparent, without any veins or spots. Some of these pieces jutted out of the earth, like ends of beams, two feet and upwards in length; others in considerable numbers, from seven to nine inches; above all, those with six panes or faces. There was a great number of a middling and smaller sort: my people wanted to carry some with them; but

I dissuaded them from this design by saying to them "What good will it do to carry all that stuff? I admit that these stones are quite pretty to look at, but they're also harder than iron or the best-tempered steel. With what would one work upon them? What use can these stones have, if they are not workable?" I threw aside all the ones that I held, with the exception of one which I concealed, without their perceiving it. I made them throw aside their stones as things which were not worth the trouble to carry. My reason was that I feared that some Frenchman seeing the stones would persuade the Naturals, by the force of gifts, to reveal the location of this place.

For my part, I carefully observed the latitude, and followed, on setting out, a particular point of the compass, to come to a river which I knew. I took that route, under pretence of going to a certain nation to procure dry provisions, which we were in want of, and which are of great help on a journey.

We arrived, after seven days march, at that nation, by whom we were well received. My hunters brought in daily many duck and teal. I agreed with the natives of the place for a large pettyaugre of black walnut, to go down their river, and afterwards to go up the Mississippi.

I had a strong inclination to go up still higher north, in order to discover mines. We embarked, and the eleventh day of our passage I caused the pettyaugre to be unladen of every thing, and concealed in the water, which was then low. I loaded seven men with the things we had.

Matters thus ordered, we set out according to the intention I had to go to the northward. I observed every day, with new pleasure, the more we advanced to that quarter, the more beautiful and fertile the country was, abounding in game of every kind: the herds of deer are numerous; at every turn we meet with them; and not a day passed without seeing herds of buffaloes, sometimes five or six, of upwards of an hundred in a drove.

In such journeys as these we always take up our night's lodging near wood and water, where we put up in good time: then at sun-set, when every thing in nature is hushed, we were charmed with the enchanting warbling of different birds; so that one would be inclined to say, they

reserved this favourable moment for the melody and harmony of their song, to celebrate, undisturbed and at their ease, the benefits of the Creator. On the other hand, we are disturbed in the night, by the hideous noise of the numberless water-fowls that are to be seen on the Mississippi, and every river or lake near it, such as cranes; flamingo's, wild geese, herons, saw-bills, ducks, &c.

## Chap. 18

As we continued, always toward the North, we began to see flocks of swans in the air, ascending to the limit of our sight and announcing their passage by piercing cries. For several days we followed a river, walking on a flat ridge which paralleled it so as to reach the source of the river, and pass around it. The woods which follow the banks of rivers in this country guided us, even if we could not see the river itself, and our view was not cut off by these woods, because the two bluffs on either side of the river were higher than the trees in the valley. We were hoping to arrive at the source the following day, when the discoverer who followed the woods in the bottom of the valley, came to us to tell me that, having seen clearings in the woods, as if in the neighborhood of a village, and even seeing several downed trees, he approached carefully to see if anyone inhabited this place, but found only a village of beavers. Knowing that I had not yet seen any, he had thought that I would be pleased to do so.

Although it was only three o'clock in the afternoon, I made the signal to regroup, and my other discoverers returned to my side. We camped within reach of these beavers' retreat, far enough that they could not see our fire. I put my people on their guard against making any noise, or firing their guns, for fear of scaring these animals, and thought it even necessary to forbid them from cutting any wood, and to go search for firewood so as not to cut any, all to conceal our arrival.

Having taken all of these precautions, we dined early, so as to be able to sleep before moonrise, which would come at about eleven o'clock. Before nightfall, I had taken the trouble to cut several branches of green wood. We were up and about before the moon shone brightly, and posted ourselves in a place which was equally far from the lodge of the beavers, and from the dam that held back the waters around it. I brought my gun and my game-bag, as it was my habit never to be without them, but I allowed my naturals only the small hatchet that all voyagers carry, and which they call a tomahawk ["casse-tete"—"head breaker"]. After having pointed out to the others where to hide, and told them where to place the green branches, I took the eldest of my party, went to the middle of the dam, and had him open a small channel, about a

foot wide, with his hatchet. He began on the outside of the dam and cut through it towards the water, lifting out the earth with his hands. As soon as the channel was cut and the water began to flow through it, we quickly and silently retreated to our blind, to watch what the beavers would do to repair this disorder.

A little after we were got behind our screen of boughs, we heard the water of the gutter begin to make a noise: and a moment after, a beaver came out of his hut and plunged into the water. We could only know this by the noise, but we saw him at once upon the bank or dam, and distinctly perceived that he took a survey of the gutter, after which he instantly gave with all his force four blows with his tail; and had scarce struck the fourth, but all the beavers threw themselves pell-mell into the water, and came upon the dam: when they were all come thither, one of them muttered and mumbled to the rest (who all stood very attentive) I know not what orders, but which they doubtless understood well, because they instantly departed, and went out on the banks of the pond, one party one way; another, another way. Those next us were between us and the dam, and we at the proper distance not to be seen, and to observe them. Some of them made mortar, others carried it on their tails, which served for sledges. I observed they put themselves two and two, side by side, the one with his head to the other's tail, and thus mutually loaded each other, and trailed the mortar, which was pretty stiff, quite to the dam, where others remained to take it, put it into the gutter, and rammed it with blows of their tails.

The noise which the water made before by its fall, soon ceased, and the breach was closed in a short time: upon which one of the beavers struck two great blows with his tail, and instantly they all took to the water without any noise, and disappeared. We retired, in order to take a little rest in our hut, where we remained till day; but as soon as it appeared, I longed much to satisfy my curiosity about these creatures.

I wanted to kill one, but waited until the next day, because I was planning something more than was the work of one night, and which would better satisfy my curiosity. If I had shot at them, I would have risked driving all the rest into the woods. We stayed in the blind until dawn, but as soon as light came, I was avid to satisfy my curiosity, and left two of my men to charge the rifles. As soon as they had done so, they left the guns and came to join us, for we had no fear of

My people together made a pretty large and deep breach, in order to view the construction of the dam, which I shall describe presently: we then made noise enough without further ceremony. This noise, and the water, which the beavers observed soon to lower, gave them much uneasiness; so that I saw one of them at different times come pretty near to us; in order to examine what passed.

As I apprehended that when the water was run off they would all take flight to the woods; we quitted the breach, and went to conceal ourselves all round the pond, in order to kill only one, the more narrowly to examine it; especially as these beavers were of the grey kind, which are not so common as the brown.

One of the beavers ventured to go upon the breach, after having several times approached it, and returned again like a spy. I lay in ambush in the bottom, at the end of the dam: I saw him return; he surveyed the breach, then struck four blows, which saved his life, for I then aimed at him. But these four blows, so well struck, made me judge it was the signal of call for all the rest, just as the night before. This also made me think he might be the overseer of the works, and I did not choose to deprive the republic of beavers of a member who appeared so necessary to it. I therefore waited till others should appear: a little after, one came and passed close by me, in order to go to work; I made no scruple to lay him at his full length, on the persuasion he might only be a common labourer. My shot made them all return to their cabins, with greater speed than a hundred blows of the tail of their Overseer could have done. As soon as I had killed this beaver, I called my companions; and finding the water did not run off quick enough, I caused the breach to be widened, and I examined the dead.

I observed these beavers to be a third less than the brown or common sort, but their make the same; having the same head, same sharp teeth, same beards, legs as short,

paws

paws equally furnished with claws, and with membranes or webs, and in all respects made like the others. The only difference is, that they are of an ash-grey, and that the long pile, which passes over the soft wool, is silvered, or whitish.

During this examination, I caused my people to cut boughs, canes, and reeds, to be thrown in towards the end of the pond, in order to pass over the little mud which was in that place; and at the same time I caused some shot to be fired on the cabins that lay nearest us. The report of the guns, and the rattling of the shot on the roofs of the cabins, made them all fly into the woods with the greatest precipitation imaginable. We came at length to a cabin, in which there were not six inches of water. I caused to undo the roof without breaking any thing, during which I saw the piece of aspin-tree, which was laid under the cabin for their provisions.

I observed fifteen pieces of wood, with their bark in part gnawed. The cabin also had fifteen cells round the hole in the middle, at which they went out; which made me think each had his own cell.

I am now to give a sketch of the architecture of these amphibious animals, and an account of their villages; it is thus I call the place of their abode, after the Canadians and the Indians, with whom I agree; and allow, these animals deserve so much the more to be distinguished from others, as I find their instinct far superior to that of other animals. I shall not carry the parallel any farther, it might become offensive.

The cabins of the beavers are round, having about ten or twelve feet in diameter, according to the number, more or less, of fixed inhabitants. I mean, that this diameter is to be taken on the flooring at about a foot above the water, when it is even with the dam: but as the upper part runs to a point, the under is much larger than the flooring, which we may represent to ourselves, by

supposing

supposing all the upright posts to resemble the legs of a great A, whose middle stroke is the flooring. These posts are picked out, and we might say, well proportioned, seeing, at the height this flooring is to be laid at, there is a hook for bearing bars, which by that means form the circumference of the flooring. The bars again bear transverses, or cross pieces of timber, which are the joists; canes and grafts complete this flooring, which has a hole in the middle to go out at, when they please, and into this all the cells open.

The dam is formed of timbers, in the shape of St. Andrew's cross, or of a great X, laid close together, and kept firm by timbers laid lengthwise, which are continued from one end of the dam to the other, and placed on the St. Andrew's crosses: the whole is filled with earth, clapped close by great blows of their tails. The inside of the dam, next the water, is almost perpendicular; but on the outside it has a great slope, that grafts coming to grow thereon, may prevent the water that passes there, to carry away the earth.

I saw them neither cut nor convey the timbers along, but it is to be presumed their manner is the same as that of other Beavers, who never cut but a soft wood; for which purpose they use their fore-teeth, which are extremely sharp. These timbers they push and roll before them on the land, as they do on the water, till they come to the place where they want to lay them. I observed these grey Beavers to be more chilly, or sensible of cold, than the other species: and it is doubtless for this reason they draw nearer to the south.

A friend of mine, having heard tell of these animals, in the same manner as I have just given this account, told me that a certain respected modern author writes on the topic quite differently than I have, and that in truth, this author has never travelled, and that he can only have written of the beaver based on what he read in others' accounts. I have read this author with pleasure, and I perceived that on several occasions, he had been falsely accused

#### chapter 19

We set out from this place to come to a high ground, which seemed to be continued to a great distance. We came the same evening to the foot of it, but the day was too far advanced to ascend it. The day following we went to its top, found it a flat, except some small eminences at intervals. There appeared to be very little wood on it, still less water, and least of all stone; though probably there may be some in its bowels, having observed some stones in a part where the earth was tumbled down.

We accurately examined all this rising ground, without discovering any thing; and though that day we travelled upwards of five leagues, yet we were not three leagues distant from the hut we set out from in the morning. This high ground would have been a very commodious situation for a fine palace; as from its edges is a very distant prospect.

Next day, after a ramble of about two leagues and a half, I had the signal of call to my right. I instantly flew thither; and when I came, the scout shewed me a stump sticking out of the earth knee high, and nine inches in diameter. The Indian took it at a distance for the stump of a tree, and was surprised to find wood cut in a country which appeared to have been never frequented: but when he came near enough to form a judgement about it, he saw from the figure, that it was a very different thing: and this was the reason he made the signal of call.

I was highly pleased at this discovery, which was that of a lead-ore. I had also the satisfaction to find my perseverance recompensed; but in particular I was ravished with admiration, on seeing this wonderful production, and the power of the soil of this province, constraining, as it were, the minerals to disclose themselves. I continued to search all around, and I discovered ore in several places. We returned to lodge at our last hut, on account of the convenience of water, which was too scarce on this high ground.

We set out from thence, in order to come nearer to the Mississippi: through every place we passed, nothing but herds of buffaloes, elk, deer, and other animals of every kind, were to be seen; especially near rivers and brooks.



When one is travelling, one is always pleased to encounter other voyagers who enjoy the same pleasures. We encountered one who was of a quite different humor and species, however. He fled as soon as we saw him, and the more we invited him to wait until we approached him, the more effort he made to distance himself from us. One of my naturels seeing that his comrades called in vain after this voyager, declared, "I will go get him, since he doesn't want to wait for us. He ran, passed him up and herded him back close to us, where he was forced to wait one gunshot away. It was a bear, who had separated from his band, or who had wanted to travel. These animals always follow the thick woods, because they find their the food which suits them, while the prairies are for them devoid of sustenance.

After a march of five days I espied a mountain to my right, which seemed so high as to excite my curiosity. Next morning I directed thither my course, where we arrived about three in the afternoon. We stopped at the foot of the mountain, where we found a fine spring issuing out of the rock.

I will gladly lose a bit of a day's progress, if I can assure myself of good water which is not too cold.

The day following we went up to its top, where it is stony. Though there is earth enough for plants, yet they are so thin sown, that hardly two hundred could be found on an acre of ground. Trees are also very rare on that spot, and these poor, meagre, and cancerous. The stones I found there are all fit for making lime.

I doubt that one will come to look for lime in this place, unless it is for the construction of houses in this vicinity, for this mountain will not fail to attract people someday, by the violent passion they will have to dig in its bowels.

We from thence took the route that should carry us to our pettyaugre, a journey but of a few days. We drew the pettyaugre out of the water, and there passed the night. Next day we crossed the Mississippi; in going up which we killed a she-bear, with her cubs: for during the winter, the banks of the Mississippi are lined with them; and it is rare, in going up the river, not to see many cross it in a day, in search of food: the want of which makes them quit the banks.

I continued my route in going up the Mississippi quite to the Chicafaw Cliffs, (Ecores à Prud'homme) where I was told I should find something for the benefit of the colony: this was what excited my curiosity.

Being arrived at those cliffs we landed, and concealed, after unlading it, the pettyaugre in the water; and from that day I sought, and at length found the iron-mine, of which I had some hints given me. After being sure of this, I carefully searched all around, to find Castine: but this was impossible: however, I believe it may be found higher up in ascending the Mississippi, but that care I leave to those who hereafter shall choose to undertake the working that mine. I had, however, some amends made me for my trouble; as in searching, I found some marks of pit-coal in the neighbourhood, a thing at least as useful in other parts of the colony as in this.

After having made my reflections, I resolved in a little time to return home;

The harvest season was approaching, and the grass was already high enough to tire us when walking. Therefore I sent the eldest of my Naturals ahead with a young man, to bring down the pirogue to the same spot where we had hidden it before ascending the river, and wait for us there. As for myself, I could only with regret leave these beautiful countries, and I chose to travel overland, so as not to be separated so soon from this pleasing land. We had carried with us only what was absolutely necessary, so that we might travel more lightly. We had no fear of being ensconced in this territory, where we had the pleasure to encounter plenty of game.

I espied a small hill, all bare and parched, having on its top only two trees in a very drooping condition, and scarce any grass, besides some little tufts, distant enough asunder, which grew on a very firm clay. The bottom of this hill was not so barren, and the adjacent country fertile as in other parts. These indications made me presume there might be a mine in that spot.

I at length returned towards the Mississippi, in order to meet again the pettyaugre. As in all this country, and in all the height of the colony we find numbers of buffaloes, elk, deer, and other game; so we find numbers of wolves, some tigers, Cat-a-mounts, (Pichous) and carion-crows, all of them carnivorous animals, which I shall hereafter describe. When we came near the Mississippi we made the signal of recognition, which was answered, though at some distance. It was there my people

killed some buffaloes, to be dressed and cured in their manner, for our journey. We embarked at length, and went down the Mississippi, till we came within a league of the common landing-place. The Indians hid the petty-augre, and went to their village. As for myself, I got home towards dusk, where I found my neighbours and slaves surprized, and at the same time glad, at my unexpected return, as if it had been from a hunting-match in the neighbourhood.

I was really well pleased to have got home, to see my slaves in perfect health, and all my affairs in good order: But I was strongly impressed with the beauties of the

countries I had seen. I could have wished to end my days in those charming solitudes, at a distance from the tumultuous hurry of the world, far from the pinching gripe of avarice and deceit. There it is, said I to myself, one relishes a thousand innocent delights, and which are repeated with a satisfaction ever new. It is there one lives exempt from the assaults of censure, detraction, and calumny. In those delightful meadows, which often extend far out of sight, and where we see so many different species of animals, there it is we have occasion to admire the beneficence of the Creator. To conclude, there it is, that at the gentle purling of a pure and living water, and enchanted with the concerts of birds, which fill the neighbouring thickets, we may agreeably contemplate the wonders of nature, and examine them all at our leisure.

I had reasons for concealing my journey, and stronger reasons still to suppress what I had discovered, in order to avail myself thereof afterwards: but the crosses I underwent, and the misfortunes of my life, have, to this day, prevented me from profiting by these discoveries, in returning to that charming country, and even so much as to lay them before the public.