

berland, and a part of Kentucky, from whence they receive iron, cordage, &c. in exchange.

From New Madrid to the forts, which are distant two hundred miles, there are but few houses. The forts belonging to Spain are almost in ruins, but those of the United States are better, and contain a garrison of twenty-five men. Both are, however, sufficient to defend the soldiers from the insults of the savages, who are their only enemies.

Two hundred and fifty miles farther, is the mouth of the river of the Arkansas, reputed the richest in Louisiana, on account of the fertility of the adjacent country, the beauty of the meadows, salt-springs, game, and mines. Having ascended it forty miles, I arrived at the village, which is advantageously situated on the left bank. The inhabitants, almost all originally French, who have emigrated from Canada, are hunters by profession, and only cultivate maize for the support of their horses and beasts of burthen. Above half the year, only old men, women, and children, are seen in the village. The men hunt wild oxen, castors, and squirrels, whose skins are less valuable than those in the northern countries. When at home they pass their time in dancing, drinking, or doing nothing: similar in this respect to the savages, with whom they live the greatest part of the year, and whose tastes and manners they contract.

The Indian nations that come to hunt on the river of the Arkansas, are the Osages, handsome and brave, but deceitful and cruel; the Panis, sworn enemies to the Whites; the Chawetas, and Chicawchas, the most numerous nation in North America, but ugly, cowardly, cunning, and deceitful beyond expression. The Spanish government maintain among the Arkansas a garrison of fifty or sixty men, commanded by a captain. After remaining in this village, which does not contain above four hundred and fifty inhabitants, only a sufficient time to procure the necessary information from the commander, I rejoined my boat, which I had left at the mouth of the river, and proceeded on my voyage down the Mississippi. From thence to Natchez, the navigation offers nothing either agreeable or interesting. Immense forests border the river, and the banks, but little elevated, are inundated at least once every year.

Natchez is the only important place possessed by the United States on the Mississippi, below the mouth of the Ohio. It contains twelve or fifteen thousand inhabitants, free-men and slaves. Most of the proprietors are enriched by the culture of cotton, for which the lands are extremely well suited. The town, which is built on high ground at the distance of one mile from the river, contains fine houses and rich