

woods. The quality of the land is supposed superior to that on Red River, until it ascends to the prairie country, where the lands on both rivers are probably similar.

About two hundred leagues up the Arkansa is an interesting place called the Salt Prairie; there is a considerable fork of the river there, and a kind of savanna where the salt water is continually oozing out and spreading over the surface of a plain. During the dry summer season the salt may be raked up in large heaps; a natural crust of a hand breadth in thickness is formed at this season. This place is not often frequented, on account of the danger from the Osage Indians: much less dare the white hunters venture to ascend higher, where it is generally believed, that silver is to be found. It is further said, that high up the Arkansa River salt is found in form of a solid, and may be dug out with the crow-bar. The waters of the Arkansa, like those of Red River, are not potable during the dry season, being both charged highly with a reddish earth or mould, and extremely brackish.

This inconvenience is not greatly felt upon the Arkansa, where springs and brooks of fresh water are frequent; the Red River is understood not to be so highly favoured. Every account seems to prove that immense natural magazines of salt must exist in the great chain of mountains to the westward; as all the rivers in the summer season, which flow from them, are strongly impregnated with that mineral, and are only rendered palatable