

from the Indians, we learn that the four most capital rivers on the continent of North America, viz. the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the river Bourbon, and the Oregon, or the river of the West, have their sources in the same neighbourhood. The waters of the three former are said to be within thirty miles of each other; the latter is rather further west.

This shews that these parts are the highest lands in North America; and it is an instance not to be paralleled in the three other quarters of the globe, that four rivers of such magnitude should take their rise together, and each, after running separate courses, discharge their waters into different oceans, at the distance of more than two thousand miles from their sources.— For in their passage from this spot to the bay of St. Lawrence, east; to the bay of Mexico, south; to Hudson's bay, north; and to the bay at the straits of Amian, west, where the river Oregon is supposed to empty, each of them traverses upwards of two thousand miles.

'The Ohio is a most beautiful river. Its current gentle, waters clear, and bosom smooth and unbroken by rocks and rapids, a single instance only excepted. It is one quarter of a mile wide at Fort Pitt; 500 yards at the mouth of the Great Kanaway; 1200 yards at Louisville: and the rapids half a mile in some few places below Louisville: but its general breadth does not exceed 600 yards. In some places its width is not 400: and in one place particularly, far below the rapids, it is less than 300. Its breadth in one place exceeds 1200 yards; and at its junction with the Mississippi neither river is more than 900 yards wide.'

Mr. Morse proceeds to state the precise measurement of the length of the Ohio, with all its windings, from Fort Pitt to its junction with the Mississippi, amounting to 1188 miles. The inundations commonly begin with April, and subside in July. A vessel drawing twelve feet water might safely navigate from Pittsburg to the sea. Two great rivers unite to form the Ohio, namely the Monongahela, and the Alleghany, both of them subservient to navigation.

From the preceding ample description, which the great importance of these rivers to the prosperity of North America authorises, it appears that, setting aside the capricious distinctions of the savage tribes, the Missouri must be regarded as the chief river which constitutes what is called the Mississippi. Measured on the same

merely comparative scale which has been adopted to give a general idea of the length of the rivers in Europe and Asia, the Missouri or Mississippi will be about 2000 miles in length. The great river of St. Lawrence is far inferior, being chiefly remarkable for its breadth. In South America the Maranon, or river of Amazons, measured on the same comparative scale, will be found to be about 2300, and the Rio de la Plata about 1900. In the same comparative way, measured on the accurate planisphere of Mr. Arrowsmith, the Kian Ku exceeds the Missouri and rivals the Maranon, which last is probably also rivalled by the Ob. Some deceptions have arisen on this curious subject, as the large rivers in America have been computed by actual navigation of the whole, or a part, in which every winding is taken into the account; while the length of those in Asia has been merely assumed from the general appearance in maps, without due attention to the innumerable deviations. A favourable climate, and other circumstances, render the American rivers more navigable; the Ob being impeded by ice, and the Kian Ku by the alpine rocks of Tibet.

'The Missouri,' says a late writer, 'like the St. Lawrence and river of Amazons, is a white muddy stream, while the Mississippi is clear like the Black River, which falls into that of Amazons.' Charlevoix has described the confluence as the grandest in the world. Each river is about half a league in breadth; but the Missouri is the broadest and the most rapid. Le Page du Pratz, in his history of Louisiana, says the French word *Mississippi* is a contraction of the savage term *Meact-Chassippi*, which literally denotes the ancient Father of Rivers. Mr. Hutchins observes, that the natives still call it Mesehasipi; and the same author adds, that the Missouri 'affords a more extensive navigation, and is a longer, broader, and deeper river than the Mississippi.' It appears from Mr. Mackenzie's voyages, 1802, that some rivers of North America have sunk more than ten feet beneath their ancient level.

The noble river of St. Lawrence is universally regarded as the second in North America, being not less than 90 miles wide at its mouth, and navigable for ships of the line as far as Quebec, a distance of 400 miles from the sea. Near Quebec it is five miles in breadth; and at Montreal from two to four. Though there be some rapids, yet this grand river may be considered as navi-