

With prayers to the mother of Jesus they strengthened their souls, and committed themselves, in all hope, to the current of the westward flowing river, the "Ouisconsin"* (Wisconsin;) a sand-barred stream, hard to navigate, but full of islands covered with vines, and bordered by meadows, and groves, and pleasant slopes. Down this they floated until, upon the 17th of June, they entered the Mississippi, "with a joy," says Marquette, "that I cannot express."

Quietly floating down the great river, they remarked the deer, the buffaloes, the swans—"wingless, for they lose their feathers in that country,"—the great fish, one of which had nearly knocked their canoe into atoms, and other creatures of air, earth and water, but no men. At last, however, upon the 21st of June, they discovered, upon the western bank of the river, the foot prints of some fellow mortals, and a little path leading into a pleasant meadow. Leaving the canoes in charge of their followers, Joliet and Father Marquette boldly advanced upon this path toward, as they supposed, an Indian village. Nor were they mistaken; for they soon came to a little town, to which, recommending themselves to God's care, they went so nigh as to hear the savages talking. Having made their presence known by a loud cry, they were graciously received by an embassy of four old men, who presented them the pipe of peace, and told them, that this was a village of the "Illinois." The voyagers were then conducted into the town, where all received them as friends, and treated them to a great smoking. After much complimenting and present-making, a grand feast was given to the Europeans, consisting of four courses. The first was of hominy, the second of fish, the third of a dog,† which the Frenchmen declined, and the whole concluded with roast buffalo. After the feast they were marched through the town with great ceremony and much speech-making; and, having spent the night, pleasantly and quietly, amid the Indians, they returned to their canoes with an escort of six hundred people.

* Called "Misconsin" in the printed Journal.—Ed.

† A dog feast is still a feast of honor among the savages. See Fremont's Report of Expeditions of 1842, '43, and '44, printed at Washington, 1845; p. 42. Fremont says the meat is somewhat like mutton. See, also, Dr. Jarvis's discourse before the N. Y. Historical Society in 1819, note B; Lewis and Clark's Journal, II. 165; Godman's Natural History, I. 254.