

A TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

with gardens, and large lotts adjoining. It consists of about 500 white inhabitants, and between four and five hundred negroes. The former have large stocks of black Cattle, Swine, &c.

[37] Three miles northerly of *Kaskaskias*, is a village of *Illinois Indians* (of the *Kaskaskias* tribe) containing about 210 persons and 60 warriors. They were formerly brave and warlike, but are degenerated into a drunken, and debauched tribe, and so indolent, as scarcely to procure a sufficiency of Skins and Furs to barter for cloathing.

Nine miles further northward, than the last mentioned village, is another, called *La prairie du Rocher*, or (the *Rock meadows*.) It consists of 100 white inhabitants, and 80 negroes.

Three miles northerly of this place, on the banks of the *Mississippi* stand *Fort Chartres*. It was abandoned in the year 1772, as it was rendered untenable by the constant washings of the River *Mississippi* in high floods.—The village of *Fort Chartres*, a little southward of the Fort,—contained

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so few inhabitants, as not to deserve my notice.

One mile higher up the *Mississippi* than *Fort Chartres*, is a village settled by 170 warriors of the *Piorias* and *Mitchigamias* [38] (two other tribes of the *Illinois Indians*.) They are as idle and debauched, as the tribe of *Kaskaskias*, which I have just described.

Four miles higher than the preceding village, is *St. Philip's*. It was formerly inhabited by about a dozen families, but at present, is possessed only by two or three.—The others have retired to the western side of the *Mississippi*.

Forty five miles further northwards, than *St. Philip's* (and one mile up a small River, on the southern side of it) stands the village of *Cahokia*. It has 50 houses, many of them well built, and 300 inhabitants, possessing 80 negroes, and large stocks of black Cattle, Swine, &c.

Four miles above *Cahokia*, on the western, or *Spanish* side of the *Mississippi*, stands the village of *St. Louis*, on a high piece of ground. It is the most healthy and pleasurable situation of any known in this

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part of the country. Here the *Spanish* Commandant, and the principal *Indian* Traders reside; who by conciliating the affections of the natives, have drawn all [39] the *Indian* trade of the *Mifouri*; ---part of that of the *Mississippi* (northwards) and of the tribes of *Indians* residing near the *Ouifconfing*, and *Illinois Rivers*, to this village. In *St. Louis* are 120 houfes, mostly built of stone. They are large and commodious. This village has 800 inhabitants, chiefly *French*;—some of them have had a liberal education, are polite, and hofpitable. They have about 150 negroes, and large flocks of black Cattle, &c.

Twelve miles below, or fouterly of *Fort Chartres*, on the *Western* bank of the *Mississippi*, and nearly oppofite to the village of *Kaskaskias*, is the village of *St. Genevieve* or *Miffire*. It contains upwards of 100 houfes, and 460 inhabitants, befides Negroes. This and *St. Louis* are all the villages that are upon the western, or *Spanish* fide of the *Mississippi*.

Four miles below *St. Genevieve* (on the western bank of the *Mississippi*) at the mouth of a Creek, is a *Hamlet*, called *the Saline*.

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Here all the falt is made, which is ufed in the *Illinois* country, from a falt fpring, [40] that is at this place*. The *Ridge* which forms the eastern bank of the *Mississippi*, above the *Mifouri* River continues northerly to the *Illinois* River, and then directs its courfe along the eastern fide of that River, for about 220 miles, when it declines in gentle fopes, and ends in extenfive rich favannahs. On the top of this *Ridge*, at the mouth of the *Illinois* River, is an agreeable and commanding fituation, for a fort, and though the *Ridge* is high and fteep (about 130 feet high) and rather difficult to afcend;—yet when afcended,—it affords

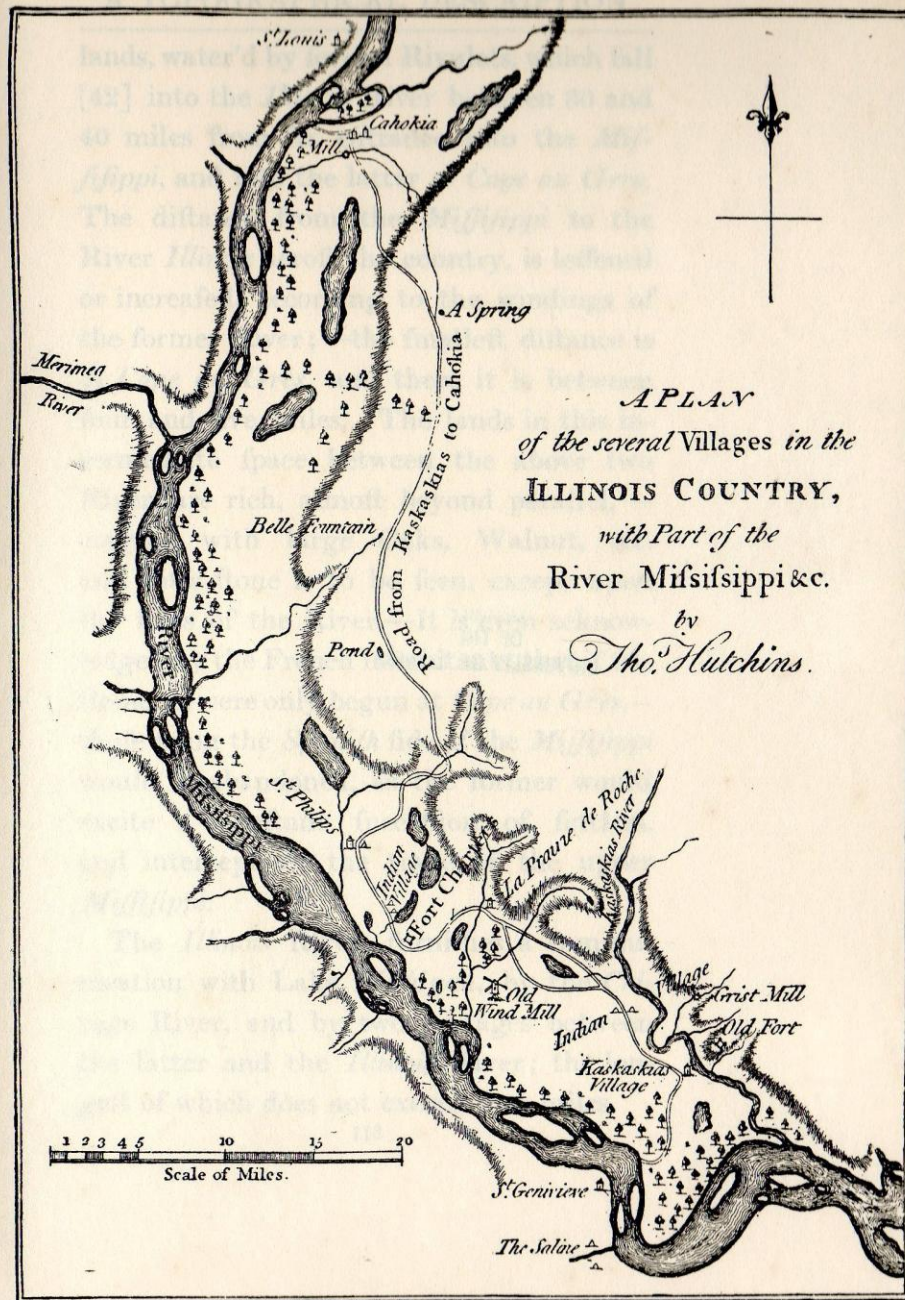
* In the feveral villages on, and near the *Mississippi*, which I have juft defcribed, (and which are delineated in the annexed plan) there were in the year 1771, twelve hundred and feventy three fencible men. To wit.—

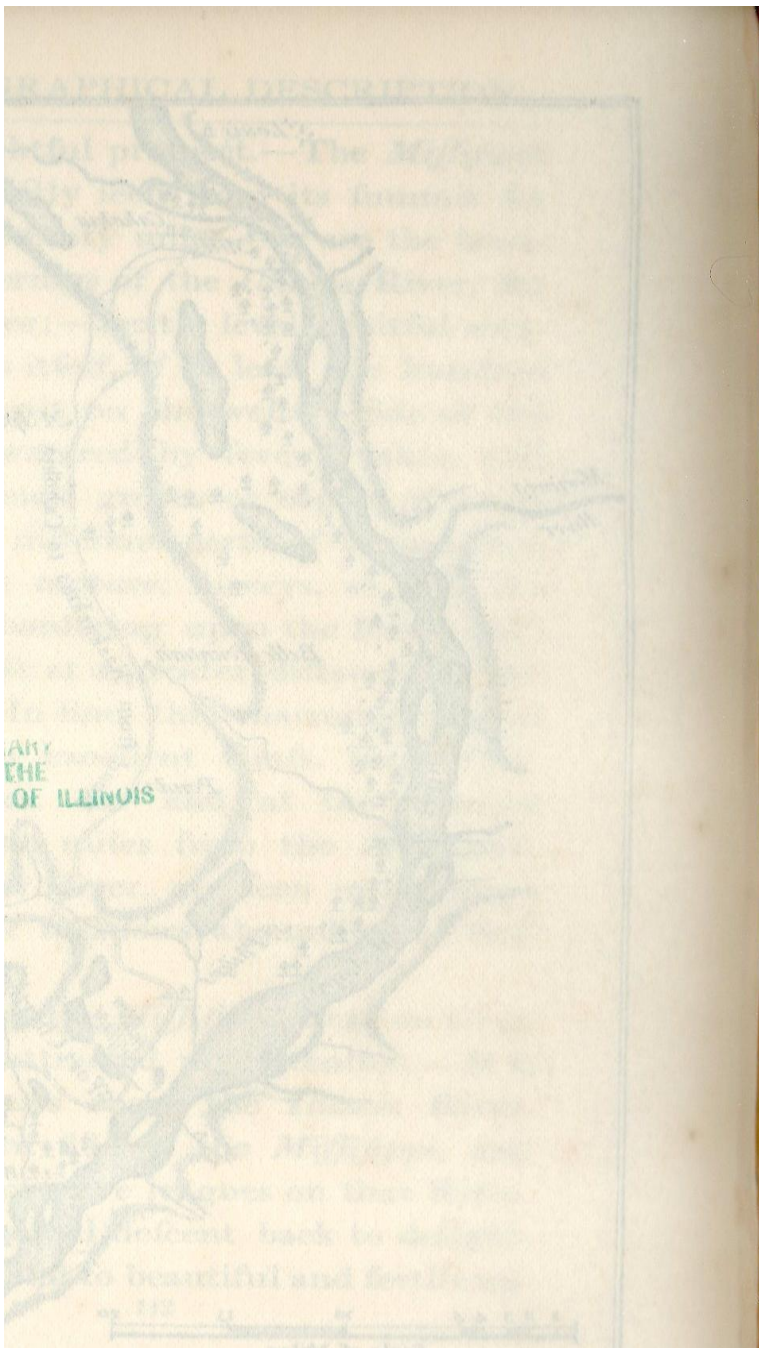
On the Eastern fide of the <i>Mississippi</i> ,	French	300
	Negroes	230
On the Western fide of the <i>Mississippi</i> ,		
At <i>St. Genevieve</i> ,	French	208
	Negroes	80
At <i>St. Louis</i> ,	French	415
	Negroes	40
		1273

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a most delightful prospect.—The *Mississippi* [41] is distinctly seen from its summit for more than twenty miles,—as are the beautiful meanderings of the *Illinois River*, for many leagues;—next a level, fruitful meadow presents itself, of at least one hundred miles in circuit on the western side of the *Mississippi*, watered by several lakes, and shaded by small groves or copses of trees, scattered in different parts of it, and then the eye, with rapture, surveys, as well the high lands bordering upon the River *Missouri*, as those at a greater distance up the *Mississippi*.—In fine, this charming ridge is covered with excellent Grass, large Oak, Walnut trees, &c. and at the distance of about nine miles from the *Mississippi*, up the *Illinois River*, are seen many large savannahs, or meadows abounding in Buffalo, Deer, &c.

In ascending the *Mississippi*, *Cape au Gres*, particularly attracted my attention.—It is about 8 leagues above the *Illinois River*, on the eastern side of the *Mississippi*, and continues above five leagues on that River. There is a gradual descent back to delightful meadows, and to beautiful and fertile up-





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lands, water'd by several Rivulets, which fall [42] into the *Illinois* River between 30 and 40 miles from its entrance into the *Mississippi*, and into the latter at *Cape au Gres*. The distance from the *Mississippi* to the River *Illinois* across the country, is lessened or increased, according to the windings of the former River;—the smallest distance is at *Cape au Gres*, and there it is between four and five miles. The lands in this intermediate space between the above two Rivers are rich, almost beyond parallel,—covered with large Oaks, Walnut, &c. and not a stone is to be seen, except upon the sides of the River.—It is even acknowledged by the French inhabitants, that if settlements were only begun at *Cape au Gres*,—those upon the *Spanish* side of the *Mississippi* would be abandoned, as the former would excite a constant succession of settlers, and intercept all the trade of the upper *Mississippi*.

The *Illinois* River, furnishes a communication with Lake *Michigan*, by the *Chicago* River, and by two portages between the latter and the *Illinois* River; the longest of which does not exceed four miles.

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[43] The *Illinois* country is in general of a superior soil to any other part of North America that I have seen. It produces fine Oak, Hickory, Cedar, Mulberry trees, &c. some *Dying* roots and medicinal Plants; --- Hops, and excellent wild Grapes, and, in the year 1769, one hundred and ten hogheads of well tasted and strong Wine, were made by the *French* Settlers, from these Grapes,-- A large quantity of Sugar is also annually made from the juice of the Maple tree; and as the Mulberry trees are large and numerous, I presume the making of *Silk* will employ the attention and industry of the settlers, when the country is more fully inhabited than it is at present, and especially as the winters are much more moderate, and favourable for the breed of Silk Worms, than they are in many of the sea coast provinces.—*Indigo* may likewise be successfully cultivated—(but not more than two cuttings in a year;) *Wheat*, *Peas*, and *Indian Corn* thrive well, as does every sort of Grain and Pulse, that is produced in any of the old Colonies. Great quantities of Tobacco are also yearly raised by the inhabitants of the *Illinois*, both for their own consumption,

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[44] and that of the Indians;—but little has hitherto been exported to *Europe*. *Hemp* grows spontaneously, and is of a good texture; ---Its common height is 10 feet, and its thickness, three inches (the latter reckoned within about a foot of the root) and with little labour any quantity may be cultivated. *Flax Seed* has hitherto been only raised in small quantities. There has however been enough produced to shew, that it may be sown to the greatest advantage. Apples, Pears, Peaches, and all other European fruits succeed admirably. Iron, Copper, and Lead Mines, as also Salt Springs have been discovered in different parts of this territory. The two latter are worked on the *Spanish* side of the *Mississippi*, with considerable advantage to their owners. There is plenty of Fish in the Rivers, particularly Cat, Carp, and Perch, of an uncommon size.---*Savannahs*, or natural meadows, are both numerous and extensive; yielding excellent Grass, and feeding great herds of *Buffaloe*, *Deer*, &c.-- Ducks, Teal, Geese, Swans, Cranes, Pelicans, Turkeys, Pheasants, Partridges, &c. [45] such as are seen in the Sea coast Colo-