

certain part of the plain, there is an insensible inclination, so that the surface of the water must be higher than the plain when the river is full. This elevation on the banks of rivers proceeds from the deposit of the mud and sand at the time of inundations. The water is commonly very muddy in the great swellings of rivers; when it begins to overflow, it runs very gently over the banks, and by depositing the mud and sand purifies itself as it advances into the plain; so that all the soil which the currents of the river does not carry along, is deposited on the banks, which raises them by degrees above the rest of the plain.

Rivers are always broadest at their mouths; in proportion as we advance in the country, and are more remote from the sea, their breadth diminishes; but what is more remarkable, in the inland parts they flow in a direct line, and in proportion as they approach their mouths the windings of their course increase. I have been informed by M. Fabry, a sensible traveller, who went several times by land into the western part of North America, that travellers, and even the savages, are seldom deceived in the distance they are from the sea if they follow the bank of a large river; when the direction of the

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