

dated to the extent of more than half a square league. To avoid the sinuosities of the river and shorten the passage, the navigation is here performed in a very extraordinary manner. The Indians made us leave the bed of the river; and we proceeded southward across the forest, through paths (*sendas*), that is, through open channels of four or five feet broad. The depth of the water seldom exceeds half a fathom. These *sendas* are formed in the inundated forest like paths on dry ground. The Indians, in going from one mission to another, pass with their boats as much as possible by the same way; but the communications not being frequent, the force of vegetation sometimes produces unexpected obstacles. An Indian, furnished with a machete (a great knife, the blade of which is fourteen inches long), stood at the head of our boat, employed continually in chopping off the branches that crossed each other from the two sides of the channel. In the thickest part of the forest we were astonished by an extraordinary noise. On beating the bushes, a shoal of toninas (fresh-water dolphins) four feet long, surrounded our boat. These animals had concealed themselves beneath the branches of a *fromager*, or *Bombax ceiba*. They fled across the forest, throwing out those spouts of compressed air and water which have given them in every language the name of 'blowers.' How singular was this spectacle in an inland spot, three or four hundred leagues from the mouths of the Orinoco and the Amazon! I am aware that the pleuronectes (dabs) of the Atlantic go up the Loire as far as Orleans; but I am, nevertheless, of opinion that the dolphins of the Temi, like those of the Ganges, and like the skate (*raia*) of the Orinoco, are of a species essentially different from the dolphins and skates of the ocean. In the immense rivers of South America, and the great lakes of North America, nature seems to repeat several pelagic forms. The Nile has no porpoises:* those of the sea go up the Delta no farther than Biana and Metonbis towards Selamoun.

At five in the evening we regained with some difficulty

* Those dolphins that enter the mouth of the Nile, did not escape the observation of the ancients. In a bust in syenite, preserved in the museum at Paris, the sculptor has represented them half concealed in the undulatory beard of the god of the river.