



## **Picturesque America; or, the land we live in**

a delineation by pen and pencil of the mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, cañons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features of our country ; with illustrations on steel and wood, by eminent American artists

**Bryant, William Cullen**

**New York, 1872**

The Lower Mississippi.

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## THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED R. WAUD.



A Bayou of the Mississippi.

**J**UST fifty years after Columbus discovered the islands of the Bahamas, De Soto, an equal of Pizarro and Cortez in courage and spirit, but not in fortune, accompanied by a broken-down and dispirited remnant of a once-powerful expedition, reached the banks of the Mississippi a thousand miles or more from its mouth. The discovery gave him a lasting fame, and furnished him a fitting grave. This river, ever-changing and yet ever the same, after more than three centuries still answers to the original description of the adventurous Spaniards, for their chief chronicler writes that "the river was so broad that if a man stood still on the other side, it could not be told whether he was a



man or no. The channel," he continues, "was very deep, the current strong, the water muddy, and filled with floating trees." Luis de Moscoso, who took command of De Soto's expedition upon the decease of the great captain, gave up all ambition except to escape with his distressed followers from a country where they had met with so much misfortune, and for this purpose he finally embarked in a few rudely-built brigantines, which, left to the current, Moscoso felt assured would reach the ocean. On the route the discomfited Europeans passed what are now known as the hills of Vicksburg, the broken lands about Fort Adams, and Baton Rouge. All else on the voyage was a monotonous swamp; the banks of the river were nearly covered with water, and lined with tall cypresses, draped as if in mourning, with pendent moss. Even the low banks finally sank out of sight; the current, however, continued to flow, and Moscoso's anticipations were realized, for the brigantines finally floated in the clear green waters of the open Gulf.

More than a century elapsed after the discovery of the river before its solitude was again disturbed by the presence of the white man. During this time its mouth became involved in popular mystery. Tales were circulated that the flood of water, where the great outlet should be, was precipitated into the earth; that the story of Moscoso and his companions was a fiction; that great dragons and sullen mists guarded the vicinity from man's approach: and these tales, so harmonious with the spirit of the age, found confirmation in the traditions of the Indians, who lived thousands of miles away, on the banks of the Fox and the Illinois.

In the year 1673 Marquette, a French monk, left Quebec, traversed the great northern lakes, and reached the "Upper Mississippi" by way of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. Having accomplished what was then supposed to be an heroic task, he returned to Quebec, and announced that, from what he saw, he was certain the Gulf of Mexico could be reached by uninterrupted navigation. Great rejoicings ensued; the *Te Deum* was sung in all the churches; the military fired salutes, and the great "western valley," by the right of discovery, was declared to belong to France. La Salle followed, and, from the Falls of St. Anthony, made the first continuous voyage of the whole length of the river. He entered the Gulf of Mexico April 9, 1682, founded the fort of St. Louis, and gave to the adjacent lands the name of Louisiana. Returning home, he fitted out an expedition to find the mouth of the river from the sea. After coasting many weary months and establishing two forts in the vicinity, his men, incensed by his severe discipline, and hopeless from his many failures, assassinated him at the mouth of Trinity River, Galveston Bay, which he had reached in his long and fruitless search.

The mouth of the river, which thus eluded search, was discovered by Iberville eighteen years later. Instead of one vast current pouring into the Gulf, it was found to consist of numerous arms, or passes, through low swamps and islands formed by the sediment brought down by the river. This net-work of creeks, bayous, and passes, is



known as the Delta of the Mississippi. It covers an area estimated at fourteen thousand square miles, and is slowly advancing into the Gulf by the shoaling caused by the deposition of fresh sediment brought down by the river. Three of the main passes bear the practical names of Southwest, South, Northeast, and the fourth is called à l'Outre.



Southwest Pass.

The ragged and unformed arms of the "passes" are involved in what appears, even after careful examination, to be an interminable marsh. It is no wonder that La Salle consumed years in the difficult search, for there is not a place on all the extensive line of the gulf-coast that is not more suggestive of the proper mouth of a grand river



265





D. G. Thompson.

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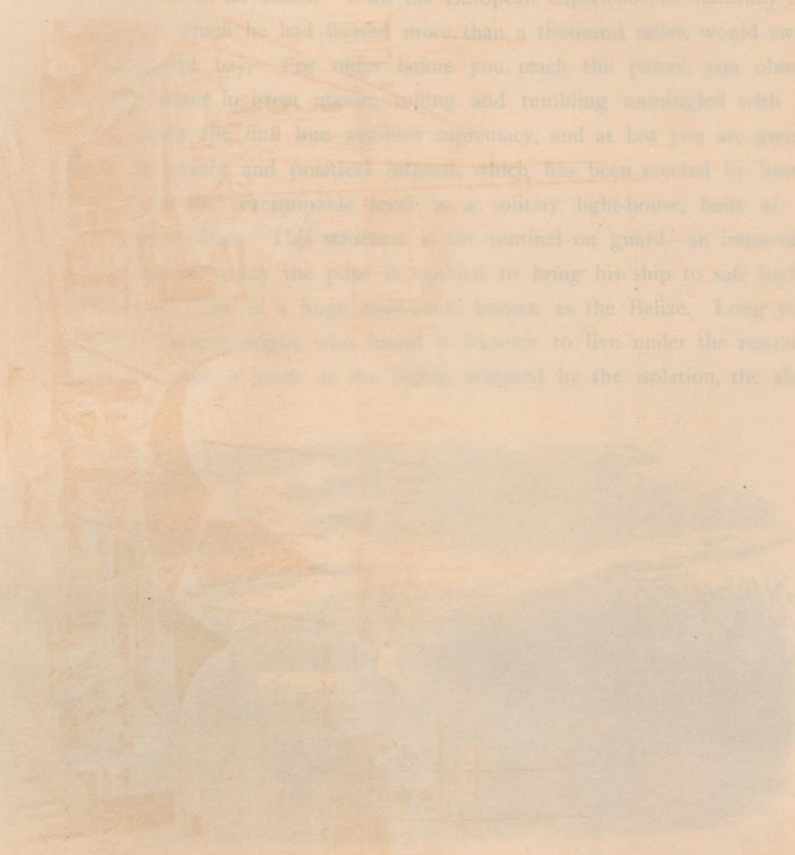
A. R. Ward.

# New Orleans

New York: D. Appleton & Co.



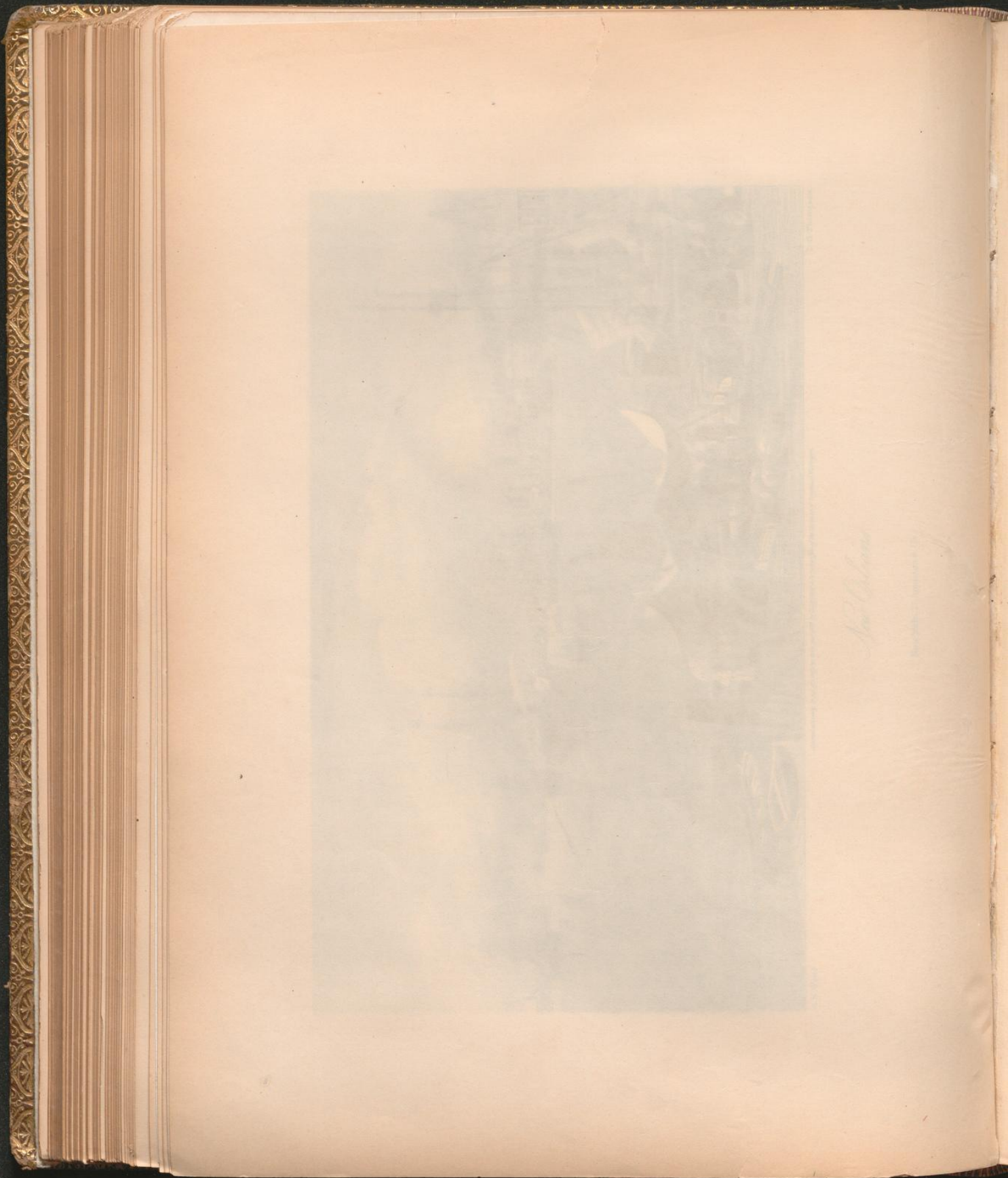
... an outlet. With his European experience, he naturally con-  
 sidered that the great river, which he had feared more than a thousand miles, would sweep  
 him out to sea. For miles before you reach the passes, you observe  
 the river in great masses, rolling and tumbling unbridled with the  
 force of the full sea against a precipitous, and at last you are greeted  
 by a narrow and peaceful channel, which has been created by human  
 industry. On the riverbank here is a solitary light-house, built at the  
 expense of the government. This structure is the sentinel on guard—an invaluable  
 aid to the pilot in guiding his ship to safe harbor.  
 The light-house is a huge structure, known as the Balize. Long years  
 ago, a man, who lived in a hut, to live under the protection  
 of the light-house, was weighed by the isolation, the aban-



THE BALIZE LIGHT-HOUSE

... and around by the sea in pieces or wrecks. Within a  
 short distance you have changed the rude bins of the sea  
 for the smooth, flat masses of these waste pieces are calcu-  
 lated to sink. The pieces are personally inferior to what  
 you would expect to see. The pieces are ever welcome visitors, as they  
 are ever to be seen at sea, and if blown permits will not only  
 give a thrilling yarn of the terrible times when the  
 Balize.

... as a long time after their entrance are only seen  
 as a boat appears a regular current flowing in the  
 direction of a swift-moving stream, and several  
 hundred boats, and then drop out here and there





than the point where it finds an outlet. With his European experience, he naturally conceived that a stream on which he had floated more than a thousand miles, would sweep grandly into a magnificent bay. For miles before you reach the passes, you observe the muddy Mississippi water in great masses, rolling and tumbling unmingled with the briny blue sea. Gradually the dull hue assumes supremacy, and at last you are greeted by a simple object of beauty and practical interest, which has been erected by human hands. Rising up from the interminable level is a solitary light-house, built at the entrance of the Southwest Pass. This structure is the sentinel on guard—an immovable point, from the bearings of which the pilot is enabled to bring his ship to safe harbor. Just inside the Northeast Pass is a huge mud-bank, known as the Balize. Long years ago people, mostly of Spanish origin, who found it irksome to live under the restraints of settled communities, made a home at the Balize, tempted by the isolation, the abun-



A Bayou of the Mississippi.

dance of game, and the occasional reward for acting as pilots or wreckers. Within a half century the growing demands of commerce have changed the rude huts of the settlement into pleasant residences. The once-solitary homes of these waste places are enlivened by good wives and bright children. The pilots are personally inferior to none of their class; and, with beautifully-modelled boats, are ever welcome visitors to the incoming ships, which they often board far out at sea, and, if leisure permits, will not only give the news of the day, but spin a thrilling yarn of the terrible times when Lafitte, the pirate, held high revels at the Balize.

The channels of the passes, for a long time after their entrance, are only discernible to the practised eye of the pilot by what appears a regular current flowing on in the universal waste. As you ascend, if on board of a swiftly-moving steamer, you perceive that coarse grass finally appears in consecutive lines, and then crop out here and there



great lumps of mud, around which seethes and boils what now has become a rushing current. It is apparent that the sediment of the river has obtained a foothold. Steadily moving onward, the shore at last becomes defined, and water-soaked shrubs are noticeable, ever moving and fretting from the lashings of the deflecting waves. When some fifteen or twenty miles have been made, you ask, possibly, with some surprise, "Is this, indeed, the great Mississippi? when you learn that you are in one of the four entrances of the river; anon, you reach the "head of the passes," and the broad-flowing stream, in its full volume, opens to your gaze. If the day is bright and the sun well toward the



Sunset in the Mississippi Swamp.

horizon, as the swelling tide moves grandly onward, its surface glistens with the hues of brass and bronze.

Vegetation now rapidly asserts its supremacy; the low banks are covered with ferns, and here and there is an ill-shapen tree; while, landward, a dark line indicates the perfectly-developed forest.

Naught but the sameness and monotony of the river now impresses you, save the consciousness that you are borne upon a mighty, sweeping flood. Mile after mile, and still the same. The bittern screams, the wild-fowl start in upward flight; and, if night sets in, you seem to be moving through an unvaried waste. The low and scarcely-



perceptible walls of Forts Jackson and St. Philip are just discernible, when lights dancing ahead give the first signs of intelligible settlement. The "quarantine" is reached, the official visit is made, and again you commence your monotonous upward trip.

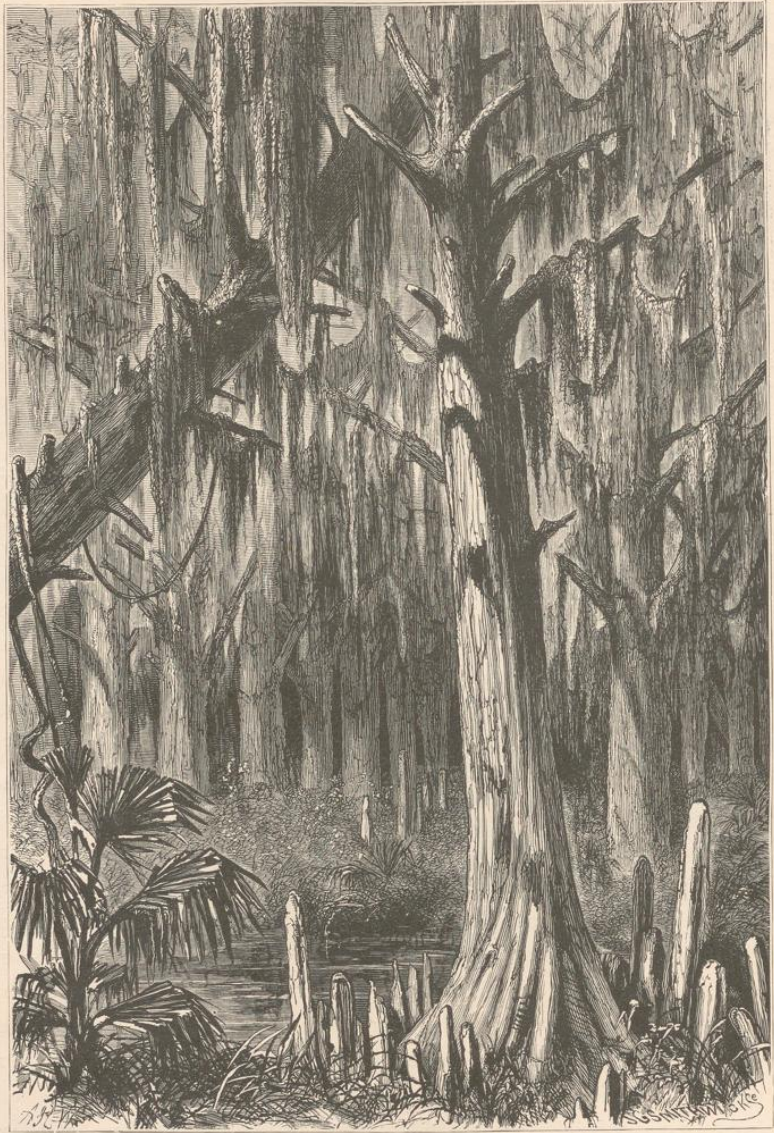
If the morning sun greets you within fifty miles of New Orleans, you find the banks of the river above the flood-tide, and evidences of permanent cultivation and happy homesteads attract the eye. Along the "coast," as the river-banks are denominated, are the "gardens," upon which the city depends for vegetable food. Then come large sugar-plantations, the dwelling-houses made imposing by their verandas, and picturesque by being half hidden in an untold variety of magnificent trees.

Thus is displayed, in the upward trip from the Balize to within twoscore miles of New Orleans, the gradual development of the banks of the Mississippi. The constant creation goes on seemingly under your own eye. From water to ooze, to mud, to soil; from grass to shrubs, to ferns, to forest-trees.

The first grand tree-development of the "swamps" is the tall and ghostly cypress. It flourishes in our semi-tropical climate of the South, being nourished by warmth, water, and the richest possible soil. The Louisiana product finds a rival in Florida; and in both places this remarkable tree is perfect in growth, often reaching the height of one hundred and thirty feet. The base of the trunk, generally covered with ooze and mud, conceals the formidable "spikes," called "knees," which spring up from the roots. These excrescences, when young, are sharp and formidable weapons, and, young or old, are nearly as hard as steel. To travel in safety through a flooded cypress-swamp on horseback, the greatest care must be taken to avoid the concealed cypress-knees; for, if your generous steed, while floundering in the soft mud, settles down upon one of them, he may never recover from the injury. The bark of the tree is spongy and fibrous; and the trunk of the tree often attains fifty or sixty feet without a branch. The foliage, as seen from below, is as soft as green silken fringe, and strangely beautiful and delicate, when contrasted with the tree itself and the gloomy, repulsive place of its nativity. The wood, though light and soft, is of extraordinary durability. It has been asserted, that cypress-trees which have been buried a thousand years under the solid but always damp earth, now retain every quality of the most perfect wood. At the root of the cypress the palmetto flourishes in vigor; and its intensely green, spear-like foliage adds to the variety of the vegetable productions in the forest solitudes.

Coming to the unsubmerged lands, which, like islands, are everywhere interspersed in this immense swamp, you meet with broad expanses on which grow the renowned "cane-brakes;" and, leaving them, you possibly come upon vistas of prairie, which, open to the constant influence of sunshine and sea-air, are dotted over with the magnificent "live-oak," the most picturesque tree of our continent. Fifty years ago the government took care of these monarchs of vegetation, depending upon their strong arms to bear our flag successfully in foreign seas; but iron and steam have combined to make more formidable





Cypress-Swamp.

defences, and the live-oak, as a necessity for naval architecture, is a thing of the past.

In contrast to the oak is the wonderful magnolia, a flowering giant, often reaching an altitude of ninety feet. Its form is attractive, and each particular bough has character-



istics of its own. Its leaves are large and crisp; the surface, exposed to the sun, is of a polished, dark green; while underneath it is almost as gray and velvety as the mullein. When the ever-green foliage of the live-oaks is trembling and whispering in the slightest breeze, or waving in great swaths in the rushing wind, the magnolia stands firm and unmoved—a beauty too full of starch to bend. But it makes amends. Its large imperial blossoms of pure white look like great ivory eggs, enveloped in green and brown. When the petals finally open, you have that bridal gift, the orange-blossom, enlarged to a span in diameter, and so fragrant that it oppresses the senses. The magnolia-tree, in full blossom, with the Spanish moss enshrouding it in a gray, neutral haze, makes a superb picture.

The scenery of the undisturbed forests of the Lower Mississippi is of a mysterious interest. Destitute though it be of the charms of mountains and water-falls, with no distant views, no great comprehensive exhibitions, it nevertheless inspires a sort of awe which it is difficult to define or account for. All objects are upon a water-level; and, when you look aloft through the gloom of the towering trees, you feel as if you were in a well, and below the usual surface of the earth, and that the place is born of the overflowing waters.

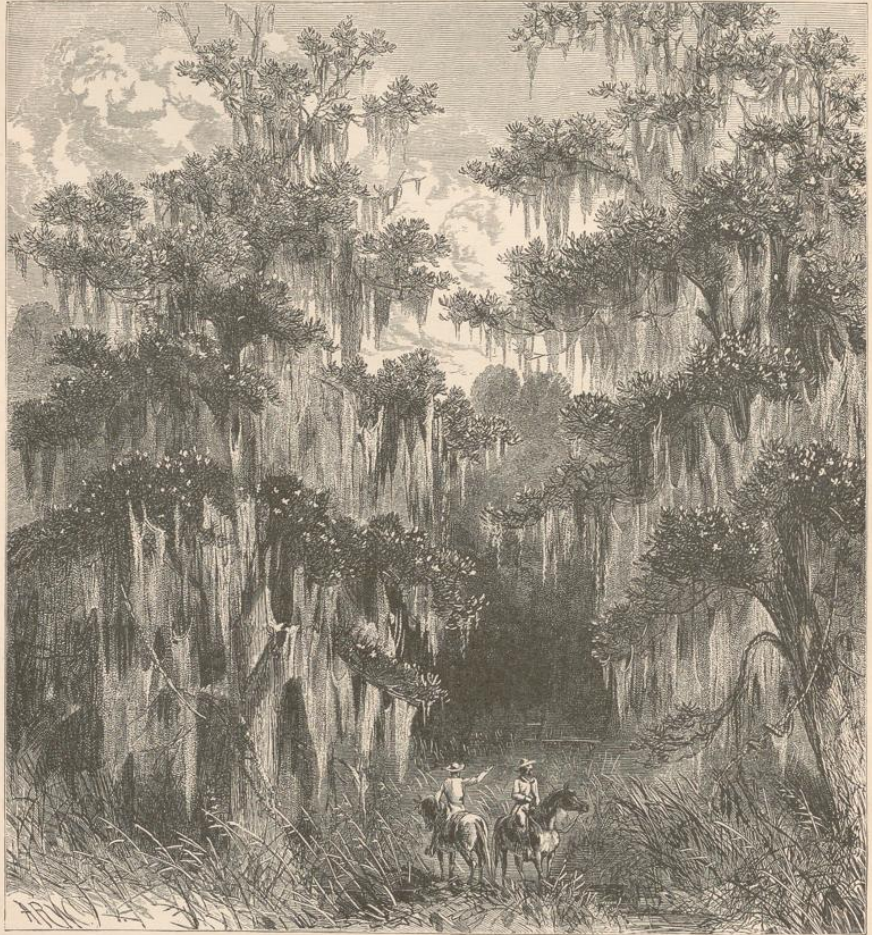
The grape-vines which festoon the trees curl round their supports with the force of cordage, and their trunks, slimy and grim, spring from the ground, and, writhing upward, like great pythons, grasp a supporting limb sixty feet in the air. The shimmer of distant lagoons greets you in the distance, and there are water-marks on the trees twenty feet above your head. If you look into the standing pools, you will find the surrounding earth as black as tar, and free from grass. The water is yellow with the sap of decaying vegetation, and the effluvia chill the heart.

If some passing storm has made a "window" and let in the sunshine, the undergrowth, heretofore stunted or entirely repressed by the shade, now starts into life, and seems to rejoice in new-born luxuriance. The bright colors are metallic in intensity. The flower of the scarlet lobelia trembles and flashes as if a living coal of fire. The hydrangea, a modest shrub in the North, becomes a tree, a very mound of delicate blue flowers.

A deep and lasting impression was made upon the early discoverers of the Mississippi by the drapery which festooned the trees, and which is generally known as Spanish moss. It is probable that Moscoso and his companions, when floating disconsolate and heart-broken toward the Gulf, looked upon this strange vegetable production as mourning drapery for the losses and disappointments of the expedition, and in sorrow for the death of their departed chieftain. This moss is a parasite that lives by inserting its delicate suckers under the bark, and draws its sustenance from the flowing sap. It is repelled by trees in perfect vigor, but in one enfeebled by age or accident the moss gains foothold, and goes on with its quiet work of destruction until, vampire-like, it consumes the heart's-blood of its helpless victim, and then enwraps it in a weird wind-



ing-sheet. Except from practical observation, it is difficult to comprehend the quantity of this parasite which will sometimes gather on even one tree; and, startling as may be the assertion, we have seen great streamers, sixty feet in length, gracefully descending from the topmost branches to the ground. We have known many trees apparently



Magnolia Swamp.

stricken with age, which, artificially relieved of this burden, have revived and assumed almost their natural vigor. In the great order of Nature, the moss has its purposes. It consumes the hard and iron-like woods which would otherwise for long years, a century perhaps, be a vegetable wreck, and thus quietly and surely makes way for a new growth.



This Spanish moss has been, with some truth, likened to the shattered sails of a ship torn into shreds by the storm, but still hanging to the rigging. To Châteaubriand it suggested ghosts, but no perfect idea can be obtained by comparison; it is essentially peculiar in its aspect.

Comparatively within a few years, the Spanish moss has become important as an article of commerce, for, when plucked from the trees, from which it is easily separated, and then thoroughly "cured" and threshed of its delicate integuments of bark and leaves, it is found that through the long, thready moss is a delicate fibre as black as jet, and almost as thick as horsehair, which it strikingly resembles. For the stuffing of mattresses and cushions it is valuable, and the increasing demand for it has already opened a new field of enterprise among the denizens of the swamps.

Bienville, the first governor of Louisiana, is represented as laying the foundation of New Orleans on the first available high land he met with in ascending the river. Below the city there are now, along the banks, nearly fifty miles of continuous cultivation, and this arable land is the result of the accretions of the hundred and fifty years which have passed since the city was founded. As you ascend the river, evidences multiply that you are approaching the great Southern metropolis. A hundred columns of smoke are seen when you look across the land known as the "English turn." Large fleets of sailing-vessels in tow pass on their way to the ocean. Nondescript craft of all kinds line the shores; at last the "Crescent City" appears, stretching miles away along the coast, and opening wide its enfolding arms as a welcome to the arriving stranger.

The river opposite the city is more than a mile and a half in width, and, notwithstanding the velocity of its movement, and the distance from the sea (one hundred and eight miles), the tide regularly ebbs and flows, modifying somewhat the sweep of the downward current. Here we have a magnificent bay, grand in dimensions as any arm of the sea. The city extends along the eastern bank as far as the eye can reach; the western side is dotted over with villages, highly-cultivated farms, and great workshops. A consecutive mile or more of steamers is in sight, including the magnificent "floating palaces," which "carry" between the "great cities of the West," down through every conceivable representative graduation to the absurd "stern-wheeler," which works its way up the shallower streams and "damp places," tributary to the Arkansas and Red Rivers. Ships of stately proportions from every land lie side by side, their masts and cordage revealing in rich confusion a leafless forest. The ferry-boats are constantly in motion, while the great steam-tugs, bringing up with ease a fleet of sailing-vessels from the mouth of the river, make the lowlands echo with their high-pressure puffing, and send great clouds of bituminous smoke from their chimneys, which, borne away to the upper current of the air, extend along the low horizon in miles of serpentine forms.

Reaching the shore, you find that the "Levee," which below was a narrow embank-





THE MOSS-GATHERERS.

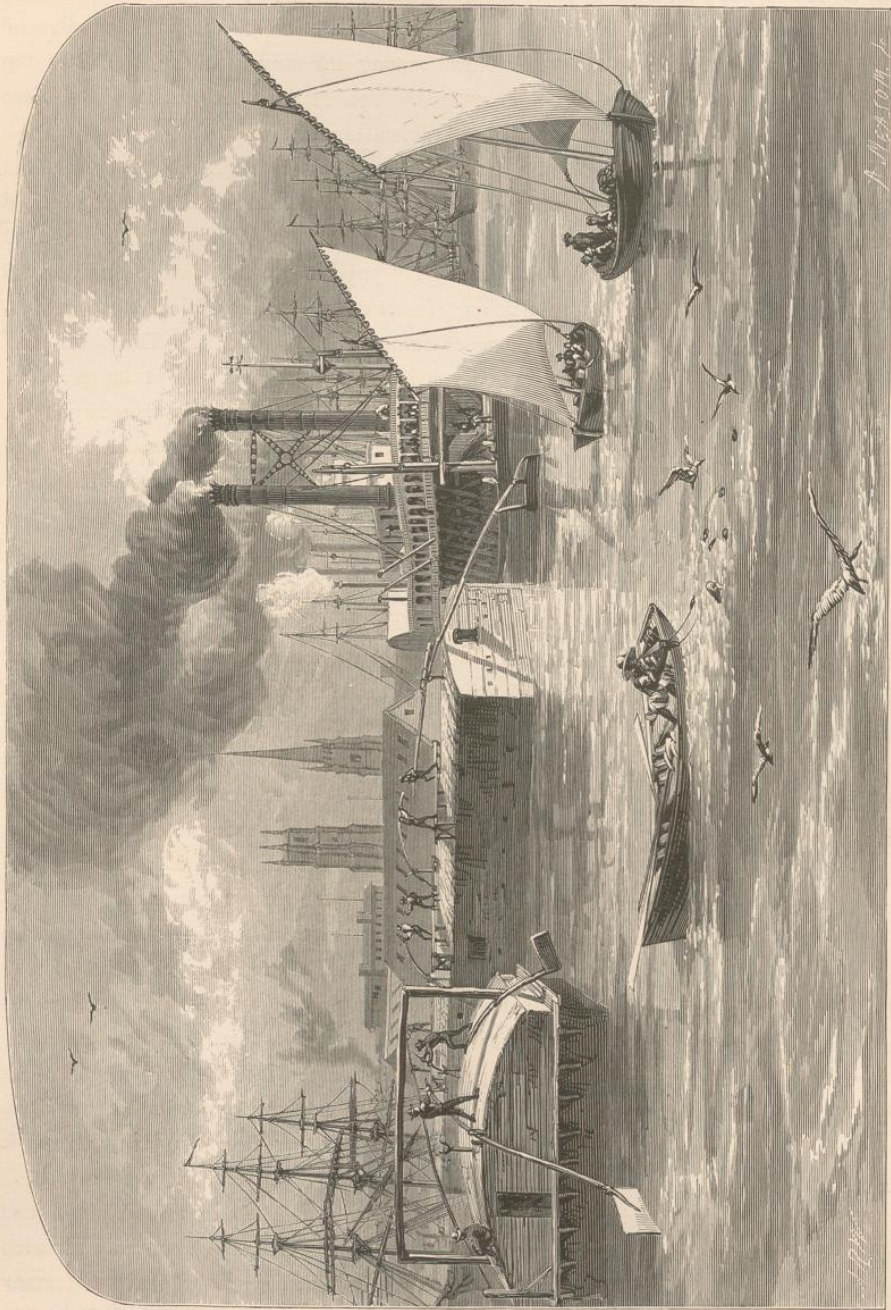


ment, is now a wide, artificial plateau, extending miles each way, and crowded with the teeming productions of the counties and States which lie on the tributary streams of the great river. A Babel of tongues is heard among the human toilers, who with the keenest industry pursue their different avocations. You realize that you are in a great city, and at the foot of a vast and surpassable inland navigation.

To float down the Western rivers was as easy as healthy respiration; to stem the swift current on the upward trip was a task of almost superhuman labor. If artificial means had not come to the rescue, much of the great West which to-day is enriched by cities and towns, and teeming with intelligent populations, would have remained a primitive wilderness. Before the application of steam for the propulsion of water-craft, commerce was carried on by means of "broad-horns" and "keel-boats." The broad-horn accomplished its purpose when, floating down the current, it arrived at its place of destination and delivered its cargo. The keel-boat not only brought down a cargo, but, loaded with foreign products, was "cordelled" by months of hard work up the river to its original starting-point. The keel-boatmen of the Mississippi were a remarkable race of men. In strength they were absolute giants; in power of sustaining fatigue, without rivals in any age. If they had been classical in the expressions of their exultation of physical power, they would confidently have challenged Hercules to combat, and, in our opinion, would have conquered that old Greek. The keel-boatmen are gone; the strong arms of iron, impelled by fire and steam, now more perfectly do what was once their gigantic work. But the broad-horn still exists in the cumbrous flat-boat, the only craft Mike Fink and his companions would recognize. And they will be seen probably for all time in the harbor of New Orleans, bearing to the great distributing markets of the world the agricultural products of our Western States. These huge edifices are really built upon large scows, sometimes a hundred feet or more in length, the superstructure a great, oblong, square building. A good specimen flat-boat, with a full load, is literally a whole block of country-stores afloat. Intended only for the temporary purpose of floating down the current with the spring-tide, they need no architectural adornments, no quality of beauty, nothing but the virtue of strength. To keep them off the "snags" and "sawyers," they are furnished with four immense "sweeps," which are sometimes, in moments of danger, worked with a power by the flat-boatmen that shows somewhat of the spirit of the mighty men they so imperfectly represent. The flat having reached its place of destination, and been safely discharged of its valuable cargo, its mission as an argosy is ended. Now, by transmutation, to meet the further demands of commerce, it is consigned to the tender mercies of the saw and axe, and converted into cord-wood.

A favorably-situated series of plantations, with land more than ordinarily high, and therefore comparatively free from overflow, in the course of long years of cultivation becomes the centre of charming landscape scenery, which combines the novelty of many exotics growing side by side with the best-preserved specimens of the original forest.





THE MISSISSIPPI AT NEW ORLEANS.



On these old plantations, modified by climate, are developed in the greatest perfection some of the choicest tropical plants. Orange-trees may be met with which are three-quarters of a century old, with great, gnarled trunks and strong arms, still bearing in perfection their delicious fruit. The sugar-cane, usually a tender, sensitive plant, has become acclimated, and, though still a biennial, repays most liberally for its cultivation. The magnificent banana, with its great, sweeping leaves of emerald green waving in the breeze with the dignity of a banner, has within a comparatively few years almost overcome its susceptibility to cold, and is now successfully cultivated.

In the rear of the garden you find the elm-shaped pecan, of immense height and beautiful proportions, bearing abundantly an oval-shaped, thin-shelled fruit, possessing all the sweetness of the hickory-nut and almond combined. As you go farther south, below the Louisiana coast, these trees form forests, and yield to their possessors princely incomes. Hedges of jasmine lead up to the door-ways of the planters' residences, and vie in fragrance with the flowing pomegranate and night-blooming cereus, and an endless variety of the queenly family of the rose. And just where the cultivated line disappears, and the natural swamp begins, will often be found the yellow jasmine climbing up some blasted tree, and usurping its dead branches for its own uses, and covering it over with a canopy of blossoms which shed a fragrance that, in descending, is palpable to the touch and oppressive to the nostrils. Here the honey-bee revels, and the humming-bird, glancing in the sunlight as if made of living sapphires, dashes to and fro with lightning rapidity, shaking from its tiny, quivering wings the golden pollen.

At nightfall, when the warm spring-day has disappeared, to be followed by the cool sea-breeze, and the atmosphere predisposes to lassitude and dreamy repose, the minstrel of the Southern landscape, the wonderful mocking-bird, will find a commanding perch near the house, where he can enjoy the fragrance of flowers in the sea-cooled air, and know that his human admirers are listening, and he will then carol forth songs of praise and admiration, of joy and humor, of sweet strains and discords, like a very "Puck of the woods," a marvel of music and song.

The settlers who first gained foothold were of French origin, and the original impress is still maintained. Up to within a very few years communities existed in Louisiana of the most charming rural population: the little chapel, with its social French priest; the men temperate and of good bearing, because the genial climate called for moderate labor; the women bright, fond of home, and inheriting a natural taste for dress worthy of the mother-country. Unprovided with the theatre and opera, these rural populations were content in matters of display with the imposing ceremonies of their church, and for amusement with the weekly enjoyment of their extemporized balls. Among this population originally were many scions of the best families of France, whose historic names are still preserved, who shed over their simple settlements in the far-off wilds of the Mississippi something of the style pertaining to the villa and *château*. In



course of time many of these old mansions along the river have disappeared, or, falling into the possession of the irreverent Anglo-Saxon, have had their outward faces buried under broadly-constructed verandas and galleries—nice places for shade and promenade, but sadly incongruous, and painfully expressive of a “sudden growth.”

The Mississippi, left to itself for hundreds of miles above its mouth in the spring-floods, would overflow its banks from two to three feet. To obviate such a catastrophe, there has been built by the enterprising planters a continuous line of levee, or earth-intrenchments, upon which slight barrier depends the material wealth of the people. The alluvium, or sediment, of the river, which is deposited most abundantly upon its



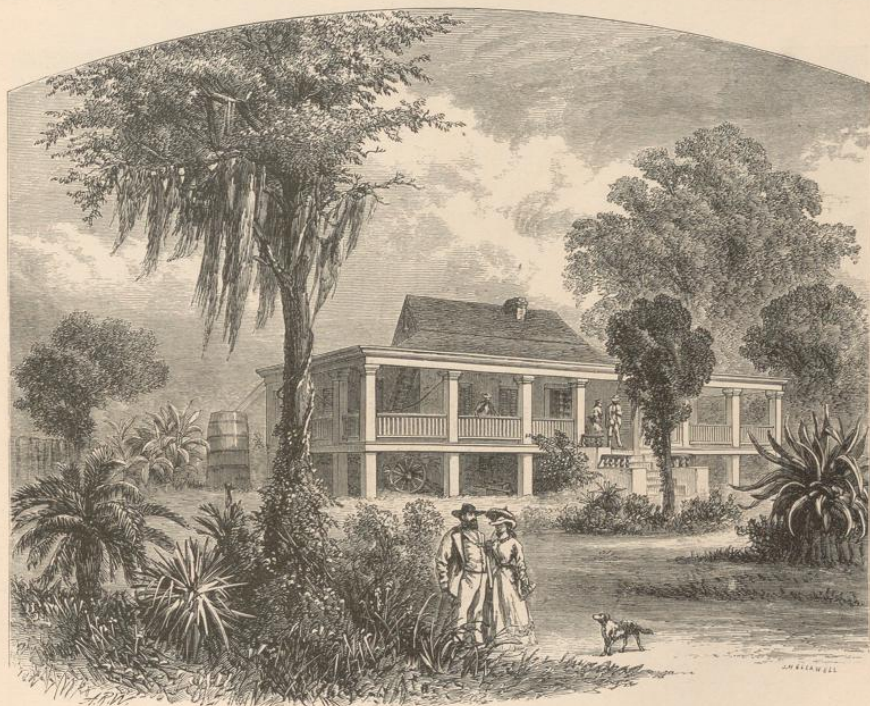
Market-Garden on the Coast.

banks, makes the frontage the highest surface, and, as you go inland, you unconsciously but steadily descend, at least four feet to the mile, until you often find the water-level marked on the trees at times of overflow far above your head. When the spring-flood is at its height, a person standing inside of the levee has the water running above him, and, if he glances at the houses in the rear, the level of the flood will possibly reach the height of the second-story windows.

For nine months of the year the Louisiana planter pays but little attention to the levee, but, when the spring comes, and the melted snows, which fall even as far off as the foot of the Rocky Mountains, find their way past his residence to the sea, he is suddenly awakened to the most intense anxiety; and when, at last, the great flood of



water—the drainage, in fact, of two-thirds of the lands of the centre of the continent—dashes over the frail embankment of the levee—he realizes what a slender hold he has upon his young crop and the earthy improvements of a large estate. The rains at these times assist in making the water-soaked barrier unstable; rats, mice, and beetles, have their burrows, and thousands of crawfish, with their claws as hard and sharp as a chisel of iron, riddle the levee with holes. Under these critical conditions, even a light wind may invite the impending catastrophe. In an unexpected moment the alarm is given that a “crevasse” is threatened! All is confusion and consternation. The cry of



Planter's House on the Mississippi.

fire at midnight in a crowded city is not more terrible. The plantation-bells are rung, the news is carried to out-of-the-way places by fleet horsemen, the laboring population assemble, and, armed with such implements as are at command, the attempt is made to stay the threatening waves. The levee at the point of assault, in spite of all action to the contrary, moves from its foundation and crumbles away, and the river, raised to an artificial height, now finds relief in a current that roars like a cataract. If the break is of formidable proportions, the passing flat-boat is drawn into the vortex, and sent like a chip high and dry into the distant fields. Even the great Western steamer that



breasts so grandly the downward current of the river, in the newly-formed rapids trembles and swerves from its course. Occasionally a crevasse is arrested by the erection of coffer-dams, by piles driven in the earth, which make the support for branches of trees or the broadside of a flat-boat; but, as a rule, these ill-directed labors are fruitless, and the sweeping current is left to take its course. The lowlands in the rear of the river-front are soon filled, and the current, at last finding a level with the river itself, converts the surrounding country for miles into a waste of waters.

Added to the danger of overflow is that of caving banks. By a natural law in the formation of the banks of the Mississippi, the alluvium is rapidly deposited upon



A "Crevasse" on the Mississippi.

the "points," and dissolves away from the "bends." It is not an extraordinary sight to see a grandly-constructed and ancient house hanging outside the levee and over the edge of the river-bank, destined sooner or later to drop into the river. You will find these things occur where the mighty current, sweeping round a bend, has worn away the soft earth, often dissolving it by acres. If this occurs in front of a plantation, the house and improvements, perhaps originally a mile from the river, will be gradually brought to the edge of the bank, to be finally engulfed. The point directly opposite the bend, however, makes, in accretions, exactly what is taken away from the opposite side of the river.