FLAGG EDMUND

FLAGG'S THE FAR WEST, 1836-1837, PART 1

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Содержание

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PREFACE TO VOLUMES XXVI-XXVII

These two volumes are devoted to reprints of Edmund Flagg's *The Far West* (New York, 1838), and Father Pierre Jean de Smet's *Letters and Sketches, with a Narrative of a Year's Residence among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia, 1843). Flagg's two-volume work occupies all of our volume xxvi and the first part of volume xxvii, the remaining portion of the latter being given to De Smet's book.

Edmund Flagg was prominent among early American prose writers, and also ranked high among our minor poets. A descendant of the Thomas Flagg who came to Boston from England, in 1637, Edmund was born November 24, 1815, at Wescasset, Maine. Being graduated with distinction from Bowdoin College in 1835, in the same year he went with his mother and sister Lucy to Louisville, Kentucky. Here, in a private school, he taught the classics to a group of boys, and

contributed articles to the Louisville *Journal*, a paper with which he was intermittently connected, either as editorial writer or correspondent, until 1861.

The summer and autumn of 1836 found Flagg travelling in Missouri and Illinois, and writing for the *Journal* the letters which were later revised and enlarged to form *The Far West*, herein reprinted. Tarrying at St. Louis in the autumn of 1836, our author began the study of law, and the following year was admitted to the bar; but in 1838 he returned to newspaper life, taking charge for a time of the St. Louis *Commercial Bulletin*. During the winter of 1838-39 he assisted George D. Prentice, founder of the Louisville *Journal*, in the work of editing the Louisville *Literary News Letter*. Finding, however, that newspaper work overtaxed his health, Flagg next accepted an invitation to enter the law office of Sergeant S. Prentiss at Vicksburg, Mississippi, where in addition to his legal duties he found time to edit the Vicksburg *Whig*. Having been wounded in a duel with James Hagan of the *Sentinel* in that city, Flagg returned to the less excitable North and undertook editorial duties upon the *Gazette* at Marietta, Ohio (1842-43), and later (1844-45) upon the St. Louis *Evening Gazette*. He also served as official reporter of the Missouri state constitutional convention the following year, and published a volume of its debates; subsequently (until 1849) acting as a court reporter in St. Louis.

The three succeeding years were spent abroad; first as secretary to Edward A. Hannegan, United States minister to

Berlin, and later as consul at Venice. In February, 1852, he returned to America, and during the presidential campaign of that year edited a Democratic journal at St. Louis, known as the *Daily Times*. Later, as a reward for political service, he was made superintendent of statistics in the department of state, at Washington – a bureau having special charge of commercial relations. Here he was especially concerned with the compilation of reports on immigration and the cotton and tobacco trade, and published a *Report on Commercial Relations of the United States with all Foreign Nations* (4 vols., Washington, 1858). Through these reports, particularly the last named, Flagg's name became familiar to merchants in both the United States and Europe. From 1857 to 1860 he was Washington correspondent for several Western newspapers, and from 1861 to 1870 served as librarian of copyrights in the department of the interior. Having in 1862 married Kate Adeline, daughter of Sidney S. Gallaher, of Virginia, he moved to Highland View in that state (1870), and died there November 1, 1890.

In addition to his labors in the public service and as a newspaper man, Flagg found time for higher literary work, and won considerable distinction in that field. His first book, *The Far West*, although somewhat stilted in style, possesses considerable literary merit. Encouraged by the success of his initial endeavor, he wrote the following year (1839) the *Duchess of Ferrara* and *Beatrice of Padua*, two novels, each of which passed through at least two editions. The *Howard Queen* (1848) and *Blanche*

of Artois (1850) were prize productions. *De Molai* (1888), says the New York *Sun* of the period, is "a powerful, dramatic tale which seems to catch the very spirit of the age of Philip of France. It is rare to find a story in which fact and invention are so evenly and adroitly balanced." Our author also wrote several dramas, which were staged in Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and New York; he also composed numerous poems for newspapers and magazines. His masterpiece, however, was a history dedicated to his lifelong friend and colleague, George D. Prentice, entitled *The City of the Sea* (2 vols., New York, 1853). This work was declared by the *Knickerbocker* to be "a carefully compiled, poetically-written digest of the history of the glorious old Venice – a passionate, thrilling, yet accurate and sympathetic account of the last struggle for independence." At the time of his death Flagg had in preparation a volume of reminiscences, developed from a diary kept during forty years, but this has never been published.[1]

"In hope of renovating the energies of a shattered constitution," we are told, Flagg started in the early part of June, 1836, on a journey to what was then known as the Far West. Taking a steamboat at Louisville, he went to St. Louis by way of the Ohio and the Mississippi, and after a brief delay ascended the latter to the mouth of the Illinois, and thence on

[1] For a list of Flagg's prose and poetical writings, contributions to periodicals, and editorial works, see "Annual Report of the Librarian of Bowdoin College for the year ending June 1, 1891," in Bowdoin College *Library Bulletin* (Brunswick, Maine, 1895).

to Peoria. Prevented by low water from proceeding farther, he returned by the same route to St. Louis, whence after three weeks' stay, spent either in the sick chamber or in making short trips about the city and its environs, the traveller crossed the Mississippi and struck out on horseback across the Illinois prairies, visiting Edwardsville, Alton, Carlinsville, Hillsborough, Carlisle, Lebanon, Belleville, and the American Bottoms. In July, after recrossing the Mississippi, he visited in like manner St. Charles, Missouri, by way of Bellefontaine and Florissant; crossed the Mississippi near Portage des Sioux, and passed through the Illinois towns of Grafton, Carrollton, Manchester, Jacksonville, Springfield, across Grand Prairie to Shelbyville, Mount Vernon, Pinkneyville, and Chester, and returned to St. Louis by way of the old French settlements of Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, and Cahokia.

During this journey Flagg wrote for the Louisville *Journal*, as already stated, a series of letters describing the country through which he travelled. Hastily thrown together from the pages of his note book, this correspondence appeared anonymously under the title, "Sketches of a Traveller." They were, however, soon attributed to Flagg, and two years later were collected by the author and published in two small volumes by Harper and Brothers (New York, 1838), as *The Far West*. These volumes are in many respects the best description of the Middle West that had appeared up to the time they were written. Roughly following the journals of Michaux, Harris, and Cuming by forty,

thirty, and twenty years respectively, Flagg skillfully shows the remarkable growth and development of the Western country. His descriptions of the Ohio, Mississippi, and Illinois rivers are still among the best in print, particularly from the artistic standpoint. His account of the steamboat traffic is valuable for the history of navigation on the Western rivers, and shows vividly the obstacles which still confronted merchants of that time. Chapters xi, xii, and xiii, dealing with St. Louis and its immediate vicinity, are the most detailed in our series, while the descriptions of St. Charles and the Illinois towns through which Flagg passed, are excellent.

The modern reader cannot but wish that Flagg had devoted less space to his youthful philosophizing, but the atmosphere is at least wholesome. Unlike Harris, whose criticism of Western society was keen and acrid, Flagg was a man of broad sympathies, possessing an insight into human nature remarkable for so youthful a writer – for he was but twenty years of age at the time of his travels, and twenty-two when the book was published. Although mildly reproving the old French settlers for their lack of enterprise, he fully appreciates their domestic virtues, and gives a faithful picture of these pleasure-loving, contented, unprogressive people. His description of the once thriving villages of Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, and Cahokia, are valuable historically, as showing the decay settling upon the French civilization after a few years of American occupation. Our author's interview with the Mormon convert, his conversations with early French and American settlers,

his accounts of political meetings, his anecdotes illustrating Western curiosity, and particularly his carefully-recounted local traditions, throw much light on the beliefs, manners, and customs of the Western people of his time. *The Far West* is thus not only a graphic and often forceful description of the interesting region through which the author travelled, but a sympathetic synopsis of its local annals, affording much varied information not otherwise obtainable. The present reprint, with annotations that seek to correct its errors, will, we think, prove welcome in our series.

In the *Letters and Sketches* of Father de Smet, we reprint another Western classic, related to the volumes of Flagg by their common terminus of travel at St. Louis.

No more interesting or picturesque episode has occurred in the history of Christian missions in the New World, than the famous visit made in the autumn of 1831 to General William Clark at St. Louis by the Flathead chiefs seeking religious instruction for their people. Vigorously exploited in the denominational papers of the East, this delegation aroused a sentiment that led to the founding of Protestant missions in Oregon and western Idaho, and incidentally to the solution of the Oregon question. But in point of fact, the Flathead deputation was sent to secure a Catholic missionary; and not merely one but four such embassies embarked for St. Louis before the great desideratum, a "black robe" priest, could be secured for ministration to this far-distant tribe. Employed in the Columbian fur-trade were a number of Christian Iroquois from Canada, who

had been carefully trained at St. Regis and Caughnawaga in all the observances of the Roman Catholic church. Upon the Pacific waterways and in the fastnesses of the Rockies, these Iroquois taught their fellow Indians the ordinances of the church and the commands of the white man's Great Spirit. John Wyeth (see our volume xxi) testifies to the honesty and humanity of the Flathead tribe: "they do not lie, steal, nor rob any one, unless when driven too near to starvation." He also testifies that they "appear to keep the Sabbath;" and that their word is "as good as the Bible." These were the neophytes who craved instruction, and to whom was assigned that remarkable Jesuit missionary, Father Jean Pierre de Smet.

Born in Belgium in 1801, young De Smet was educated in a religious school at Malines. When twenty years of age he responded to an appeal to cross the Atlantic and carry the gospel to the red men of the Western continent. Arrived in Philadelphia (1821), the young Belgian was astonished to see a well-built town, travelled roads, cultivated farms, and other appurtenances of civilization; he had expected only a wilderness and savages. Two years were spent in the Jesuit novitiate in Maryland, before the zealous youth saw any traces of frontier life. Then the youthful novice was removed to Florissant, Missouri, not far from St. Louis, where the making of a log-cabin and the breaking of fresh soil furnished a mild foretaste of his future career. Still more years elapsed before the cherished project of missionary labor could be realized. In 1829 St. Louis University

was founded, and herein the young priest, who had been ordained in 1827, was employed upon the instructional force. Later years (1833-37) were spent in Europe, while recruiting his health and securing supplies for the infant university. It was not until 1838 that the first missionary enterprise was undertaken by Father de Smet, when a chapel for the Potawatomi was built on the site of the modern Council Bluffs. There, in 1839, the fourth Flathead deputation rested after the long journey from their Rocky Mountain home; and at the earnest solicitation of the young missioner, he was in the spring of 1840, detailed by his superior to ascertain and report upon the prospects of a mission to the mountain Indians.

Of the two tribesmen who had come down to St. Louis, Pierre the Left-handed (Gaucher) was sent back to his people with news of the success of the embassy, while his colleague Ignace was detained to serve as guide to the adventurous Jesuit who in April, 1840, set forth for the Flathead country with the annual fur-trade caravan. The route traversed was the well-known Oregon Trail as far as the Green River rendezvous; there the father was rejoiced to meet a deputation of ten Flatheads, sent to escort him to their habitat, and at Prairie de la Messe was celebrated for them the first mass in the Western mountains. The trail led them on through Jackson's and Pierre's Holes; and in the latter valley the waiting tribesmen to the number of sixteen hundred had collected, and received the "black robe" as a messenger from Heaven. Chants and prayers were heard on every side; "in

a fortnight," reports the delighted missionary, "all knew their prayers." After two months spent among his "dear Flatheads," wandering with them across the divide, and encamping for some time at the Three Forks of the Missouri – where nearly forty years before Lewis and Clark first encountered the Western Indians – De Smet took leave of his neophytes. Protected by a strong guard through the hostile Blackfeet country, he arrived at last at the fur-trade post of Fort Union at the junction of the Missouri and the Yellowstone. Descending thence to St. Louis he arrived there on the last day of December, 1840.

The remainder of the winter was occupied in preparations for a new journey, and in securing men and supplies for the equipment of the far-away mission begun under such favorable auspices. Once more the father departed from Westport – this time in May, 1841. The little company consisted, besides himself, of two other priests and three lay brothers, all of the latter being skilled mechanics. Among the members of the caravan were a number of California pioneers, one of whom has thus related his impressions of the young missionary: "He was genial, of fine presence, and one of the saintliest men I have ever known, and I cannot wonder that the Indians were made to believe him divinely protected. He was a man of great kindness and great affability under all circumstances; nothing seemed to disturb his temper."[2]

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[2] John Bidwell, "First Emigrant Train to California," in *Century Magazine*, new series, xix, pp. 113, 114.

Father de Smet's letters describe in detail the scenery and incidents of the route from the eastern border of Kansas to Fort Hall, in Idaho, where the British factor received the travellers with abounding hospitality. Here some of the Flatheads were in waiting to convey the missionaries to the tribe, the chiefs of which met them in Beaver Head Valley, Montana, and testified their welcome with dignified simplicity. Passing over to the waters of the Columbia, they founded the mission of St. Mary upon the first Sunday in October, in the beautiful Bitter Root valley at the site of the later Fort Owen. Thence Father de Smet made a rapid journey in search of provisions to Fort Colville, on the upper Columbia, but was again at his mission stockade before the close of the year. In April a longer journey was projected, as far as Fort Vancouver, on the lower Columbia, where Dr. McLoughlin, the British factor, received the good priest with that cordial greeting for which he was already famous. During this journey the father narrowly escaped drowning in the turbulent rapids of the Columbia, where five of his boatmen perished. Returned to St. Mary's, the prospects for a harvest of souls both among the Flatheads and the neighboring tribes appeared so promising that the missionary determined to seek re-enforcement and further aid in Europe. Thereupon he left his companions in charge of the "new Paraguay" of his hopes, and once more undertook the long and adventurous journey to the settlements, this time by way of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, arriving at St. Louis the last of October, 1842. At this

point the journeys detailed in the volume here reprinted come to an end. The later career of Father de Smet and his subsequent journeyings will be detailed in the preface to volumes xxviii and xxix, in the latter of which will appear his *Oregon Missions*.

Father de Smet's writings on missionary subjects ended only with his death, and were increasingly voluminous and detailed. The *Letters and Sketches* were his first published work, with the exception of a portion of a compilation that appeared in 1841, on the Jesuit missions of Missouri. We find therefore, in the present reprint, the vitality and enthusiasm of the young traveller relating new scenes, and the abounding joy of the successful missionary uplifting a barbaric race. The book was written with the avowed purpose of creating interest in his newly-organized work, and securing contributions therefor. The freshness of description, the wholesome simplicity of the narrative, the frank presentation of wilderness life, charm the reader, and make this book a classic of early Western exploration. Cast in the form of letters, wherein there is more or less repetition of statement, it is nevertheless evident that these have been subjected to a certain editorial revision, and that literary quality has been considered. Aside from the interest evoked by the personality of the writer, and the events of his narrative, the work throws much light upon wilderness travel, the topography and scenery of the Rocky Mountain region, and above all upon the habits and customs, modes of thought, social standards, and religious conceptions of the important tribes of the interior.

After the present series of reprints had been planned for, and announced in a detailed prospectus, there was issued from the press of Francis P. Harper of New York the important volumes edited by Major H. M. Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, entitled *Life, Letters, and Travels of Father Pierre Jean de Smet, S. J., 1801-73*. This publication contains much new material, derived from manuscript sources, which has been interwoven in chronological order with the missionary's several books; and to it all have been added an adequate biography and bibliography of De Smet. This scholarly work has been of great service to us in preparing for accurate reprint the original editions of the only two of Father de Smet's publications that fall within the chronological field of our series.

In the preparation for the press of Flagg's *The Far West*, the Editor has had the assistance of Clarence Cory Crawford, A. M.; in editing Father de Smet's *Letters and Sketches*, his assistant has been Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph.D.

R. G. T.

Madison, Wis., April, 1906.

TO THE READER

"He that writes
Or makes a feast, more certainly invites
His judges than his friends; there's not a guest
But will find something wanting or ill dress'd."

In laying before the majesty of the public a couple of volumes like the present, it has become customary for the author to disclaim in his preface all original design of *perpetrating a book*, as if there were even more than the admitted *quantum* of sinfulness in the act. Whether or not such disavowals now-a-day receive all the credence they merit, is not for the writer to say; and whether, were the prefatory asseveration, as in the present case, diametrically opposed to what it often is, the reception would be different, is even more difficult to predict. The articles imbodied in the following volumes were, a portion of them, in their original, hasty production, *designed* for the press; yet the author unites in the disavowal of his predecessors of all intention at that time of perpetrating *a book*.

In the early summer of '36, when about starting upon a ramble over the prairies of the "Far West," in hope of renovating the energies of a shattered constitution, a request was made of the writer, by the distinguished editor of the Louisville Journal,

to contribute to the columns of that periodical whatever, in the course of his pilgrimage, might be deemed of sufficient interest.[3] A series of articles soon after made their appearance in that paper under the title, "*Sketches of a Traveller*." They were, as their name purports, mere sketches from a traveller's *portfeuille*, hastily thrown upon paper whenever time, place, or opportunity rendered convenient; in the steamboat saloon, the inn bar-room, the log-cabin of the wilderness, or upon the venerable mound of the Western prairie. With such favour were these hasty productions received, and so extensively were they circulated, that the writer, on returning from his pilgrimage to "the shrine of health," was induced, by the solicitations of partial friends, to enter at his leisure upon the preparation for the press of a mass of MSS. of a similar character, written at

[3] George D. Prentice (1802-70), founder of the Louisville *Journal*, was graduated from Brown University in 1823. Two years later he became editor of the Connecticut *Mirror* and in 1828-30 had charge of the *New England Weekly Review*. In the spring of 1830, at the earnest solicitation of several influential Connecticut Whigs, he went West to gather data for a life of Henry Clay. Once in Kentucky he threw all the force of his political genius in support of Clay's policy. On November 24, 1830, he issued the first number of the Louisville *Journal*, which through his able management was soon recognized as the chief Whig organ in the West. Wholly devoted to Clay's cause, its own reputation rose and declined with that of its champion. The *Journal* maintained an existence till 1868, when Henry Watterson consolidated it with the Courier, under the title of *Courier-Journal*. Prentice is reputed to have been the originator of the short, pointed paragraph in journalism. His *Life of Henry Clay* (Hartford, 1831) is well known. In 1859 he published a collection of poems under the name *Prenticeana* (New York). It was reprinted in 1870 with a biography of the author by G. W. Griffin (Philadelphia). – Ed.

the time, which had never been published; a thorough revision and enlargement of that which had appeared, united with *this*, it was thought, would furnish a passable volume or two upon the "Far West." Two years of residence in the West have since passed away; and the arrangement for the press of the fugitive sheets of a wanderer's sketch-book would not yet, perhaps, have been deemed of sufficient importance to warrant the necessary labour, had he not been daily reminded that his productions, whatever their merit, were already public property so far as could be the case, and at the mercy of every one who thought proper to assume paternity. "Forbearance ceased to be longer a virtue," and the result is now before the reader. But, while alluding to that aid which his labours may have rendered to others, the author would not fail fully to acknowledge his own indebtedness to those distinguished writers upon the West who have preceded him. To Peck, Hall, Flint, Wetmore, and to others, his acknowledgments are due and are respectfully tendered.[4]

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[4] John M. Peck, a Baptist minister, went as a missionary to St. Louis in 1817. After nine years of preaching in Missouri and Illinois, he founded (1826) the Rocky Spring Seminary for training teachers and ministers. It is said that he travelled more than six thousand miles collecting money for endowing this school. In 1828 Peck began publishing the *Western Pioneer*, the first official organ of the Baptist church in the West, and served as the corresponding secretary and financial agent of the American Baptist Publication Society from 1843 to 1845. He died at Rocky Springs, Illinois, in 1858. Peck made important contributions to the publications of the early historical societies in the Northwest. His chief independent works are: *A Guide for Emigrants* (Boston, 1831), republished as *A New Guide for Emigrants* (Boston, 1836); *Gazetteer of Illinois* (Jacksonville, 1834 and 1837); *Father Clark or the Pioneer Preacher* (New York, 1855); and "Life of Daniel Boone," in Jared Sparks,

In extenuation of the circumstance that some portions of these volumes have already appeared, though in a crude state, before the public, the author has but to suggest that many works, with which the present will not presume to compare, have made their debut on the unimposing pages of a periodical. Not to dwell upon the writings of Addison and Johnson, and other classics of British literature, several of Bulwer's most polished productions, the elaborate Essays of Elia, Wirt's British Spy,

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American Biography.Judge James Hall was born in Philadelphia (1793), and died near Cincinnati in 1868. He was a member of the Washington Guards during the War of 1812-15, was promoted to the 2nd United States artillery, and accompanied Decatur on his expedition to Algiers (1815). Resigning in 1818, he practiced law at Shawneetown, Illinois (1820-27), and filled the office of public prosecutor and judge of the circuit court. He moved to Vandalia (1827) and began editing the *Illinois Intelligencer* and the *Illinois Monthly Magazine*. From 1836 to 1853 he was president of the commercial bank at Cincinnati, and acted as state treasurer. He published: *Letters from the West* (London, 1828); *Legends of the West* (1832); *Memoirs of the Public Services of General William Henry Harrison* (Philadelphia, 1836); *Sketches of History, Life and Manners of the West* (Philadelphia, 1835); *Statistics of the West at the Close of 1836* (Cincinnati, 1836); *Notes on the Western States* (Philadelphia, 1838); *History and Biography of the Indians of North America* (3 volumes, 1838-44); *The West, its Soil, Surface, etc.* (Cincinnati, 1848); *The West, its Commerce and Navigation* (Cincinnati, 1848); besides a few historical novels. For a contemporary estimate of the value of Hall's writings see *American Monthly Magazine* (New York, 1835), v, pp. 9-15.For Timothy Flint, see Pattie's *Narrative*, in our volume xviii, p. 25, note 1.Major Alphonso Wetmore (1793-1849) was of much less importance as a writer on Western history than those above mentioned. He entered the 23rd infantry in 1812, and subsequently was transferred to the 6th. He served as paymaster for his regiment from 1815 to 1821, and was promoted to a captaincy (1819). In 1816 he moved with his family to Franklinton, Missouri, and later practiced law in St. Louis. His chief contribution to Western travel is a *Gazetteer of Missouri* (St. Louis, 1837). – Ed.

Hazlitt's Philosophical Reviews, Coleridge's Friend, most of the novels of Captain Marryatt and Theodore Hook, and many of the most elegant works of the day, have been prepared for the pages of a magazine.

And now, with no slight misgiving, does the author commit his firstborn bantling to the tender mercies of an impartial public. Criticism he does not deprecate, still less does he brave it; and farther than either is he from soliciting undue favour. Yet to the *reader*, as he grasps him by the hand in parting, would he commit his book, with the quaint injunction of a distinguished but eccentric old English writer upon an occasion somewhat similar:

"I exhort all people, gentle and simple, men, women, and children, to buy, to read, to extol these labours of mine. Let them not fear to defend every article; for I will bear them harmless. I have arguments good store, and can easily confute, either logically, theologically, or metaphysically, all those who oppose me."

E. F.

New-York, Oct., 1838.

I

"I do remember me, that, in my youth,
When I was wandering – "

Manfred.

It was a bright morning in the early days of "leafy June." Many a month had seen me a wanderer from distant New-England; and now I found myself "once more upon the waters," embarked for a pilgrimage over the broad prairie-plains of the sunset West. A drizzly, miserable rain had for some days been hovering, with proverbial pertinacity, over the devoted "City of the Falls," and still, at intervals, came lazily pattering down from the sunlighted clouds, reminding one of a hoiden girl smiling through a shower of April tear-drops, while the quay continued to exhibit all that wild uproar and tumult, "confusion worse confounded," which characterizes the steamboat commerce of the Western Valley. The landing at the time was thronged with steamers, and yet the incessant "boom, boom, boom," of the high-pressure engines, the shrill hiss of scalding steam, and the fitful port-song of the negro firemen rising ever and anon upon the breeze, gave notice of a constant augmentation to the number. Some, too, were getting under way, and their lower *guards* were thronged by emigrants with their household and

agricultural utensils. Drays were rattling hither and thither over the rough pavement; Irish porters were cracking their whips and roaring forth alternate staves of blasphemy and song; clerks hurrying to and fro, with fluttering note-books, in all the fancied dignity of "brief authority;" hackney-coaches dashing down to the water's edge, apparently with no motive to the nervous man but noise; while at intervals, as if to fill up the pauses of the Babel, some incontinent steamer would hurl forth from the valves of her overcharged boilers one of those deafening, terrible blasts, echoing and re-echoing along the river-banks, and streets, and among the lofty buildings, till the very welkin rang again.

To one who has never visited the public wharves of the great cities of the West, it is no trivial task to convey an adequate idea of the spectacle they present. The commerce of the Eastern seaports and that of the Western Valley are utterly dissimilar; not more in the staples of intercourse than in the mode in which it is conducted; and, were one desirous of exhibiting to a friend from the Atlantic shore a picture of the prominent features which characterize commercial proceedings upon the Western waters, or, indeed, of Western character in its general outline, at a *coup d'œil*, he could do no better than to place him in the wild uproar of the steamboat quay. Amid the "crowd, the hum, the shock" of such a scene stands out Western peculiarity in all its stern proportion.

Steamers on the great waters of the West are well known to indulge no violently conscientious scruples upon the subject

of punctuality, and a solitary exception at our behest, or in our humble behalf, was, to be sure, not an event to be counted on. "There's dignity in being waited for;" hour after hour, therefore, still found us and left us amid the untold scenes and sounds of the public landing. It is true, and to the unending honour of all concerned be it recorded, very true it is our doughty steamer ever and anon would puff and blow like a porpoise or a narwhal; and then would she swelter from every pore and quiver in every limb with the ponderous labouring of her huge enginery, and the steam would shrilly whistle and shriek like a spirit in its confinement, till at length she united her whirlwind voice to the general roar around; and all this indicated, indubitably, an intention to be off and away; but a knowing one was he who could determine the *when*.

Among the causes of our wearisome detention was one of a nature too melancholy, too painfully interesting lightly to be alluded to. Endeavouring to while away the tedium of delay, I was pacing leisurely back and forth upon the *guard*, surveying the lovely scenery of the opposite shore, and the neat little houses of the village sprinkled upon the plain beyond, when a wild, piercing shriek struck upon my ear. I was hurrying immediately forward to the spot whence it seemed to proceed, when I was intercepted by some of our boat's crew bearing a mangled body. It was that of our second engineer, a fine, laughing young fellow, who had been terribly injured by becoming entangled with the flywheel of the machinery while in motion. He was laid upon

the passage floor. I stood at his head; and never, I think, shall I forget those convulsed and agonized features. His countenance was ghastly and livid; beaded globules of cold sweat started out incessantly upon his pale brow; and, in the paroxysms of pain, his dark eye would flash, his nostril dilate, and his lips quiver so as to expose the teeth gnashing in a fearful manner; while a muttered execration, dying away from exhaustion, caused us all to shudder. And then that wild despairing roll of the eyeball in its socket as the miserable man would glance hurriedly around upon the countenances of the bystanders, imploring them, in utter helplessness, to lend him relief. Ah! it is a fearful thing to look upon these strivings of humanity in the iron grasp of a power it may in vain resist! From the quantity of blood thrown off, the oppressive fulness of the chest, and the difficult respiration, some serious pulmonary injury had evidently been sustained; while a splintered clavicle and limbs shockingly shattered racked the poor sufferer with anguish inexpressible. It was evident he believed himself seriously injured, for at times he would fling out his arms, beseeching those around him to "hold him back," as if even then he perceived the icy grasp of the death angel creeping over his frame.

Perhaps I have devoted more words to the detail of this melancholy incident than would otherwise have been the case, on account of the interest which some circumstances in the sufferer's history, subsequently received from the captain of our steamer, inspired.

"Frank, poor fellow," said the captain, "was a native of Ohio, the son of a lone woman, a widow. He was all her hope, and to his exertions she was indebted for a humble support."

Here, then, were circumstances to touch the sympathies of any heart possessed of but a tithe of the nobleness of our nature; and I could not but reflect, as they were recounted, how like the breath of desolation the first intelligence of her son's fearful end must sweep over the spirit of this lonely widow; for, like the wretched Constance, she can "never, never behold him more."[5]

> "Her life, her joy, her food, her all the world!
> Her widow-comfort, and her sorrow's cure!"

While indulging in these sad reflections a gay burst of music arrested my attention; and, looking up, I perceived the packet-boat "Lady Marshall" dropping from her mooring at the quay, her decks swarming with passengers, and under high press of steam, holding her bold course against the current, while the merry dashing of the wheels, mingling with the wild clang of martial music, imparted an air almost of romance to the scene. How strangely did this contrast with that misery from which my eye had just turned!

There are few objects more truly grand – I had almost said sublime – than a powerful steamer struggling triumphantly with the rapids of the Western waters. The scene has in it a something

[5] The reference is to Shakespeare's *King John*, III, iv. – Ed.

of that power which we feel upon us in viewing a ship under full sail; and, in some respects, there is more of the sublime in the humbler triumph of man over the elements than in that more vast. Sublimity is a result, not merely of massive, extended, unmeasured greatness, but oftener, and far more impressively, does the sentiment arise from a *combination* of vast and powerful objects. The mighty stream rolling its volumed floods through half a continent, and hurrying onward to mingle its full tide with the "Father of Waters," is truly sublime; its resistless power is sublime; the memory of its by-gone scenes, and the venerable moss-grown forests on its banks, are sublime; and, lastly, the noble fabric of man's workmanship struggling and groaning in convulsed, triumphant effort to overcome the resistance offered, completes a picture which demands not the heaving ocean-waste and the "oak leviathan" to embellish.

It was not until the afternoon was far advanced that we found ourselves fairly embarked. A rapid freshet had within a few hours swollen the tranquil Ohio far beyond its ordinary volume and velocity, and its turbid waters were rolling onward between the green banks, bearing on their bosom all the varied spoils of their mountain-home, and of the rich region through which they had been flowing. The finest site from which to view the city we found to be the channel of the Falls upon the Indiana side of the stream, called the *Indian* chute, to distinguish it from two others, called the *Middle* chute and the *Kentucky* chute. The prospect from this point is noble, though the uniformity of the structures,

the fewness of the spires, the unimposing character of the public edifices, and the depression of the site upon which the city stands, give to it a monotonous, perhaps a lifeless aspect to the stranger.

It was in the year 1778 that a settlement was first commenced upon the spot on which the fair city of Louisville now stands.[6] In the early spring of that year, General George Rodgers Clarke, under authority of the State of Virginia, descended the Ohio with several hundred men, with the design of reducing the military posts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Fort Vincent, then held by British troops. Disembarking upon Corn Island at the Falls of the Ohio, opposite the present city, land sufficient for the support of six families, which were left, was cleared and planted with *corn*. From this circumstance the island received a name which it yet retains. General Clarke proceeded upon his expedition, and, in the autumn returning successful, the emigrants were removed to the main land, and a settlement was commenced where Louisville now stands. During the few succeeding years, other families from Virginia settled upon the spot, and in the spring of 1780 seven stations were formed upon Beargrass Creek,[7] which here empties

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[6] For a brief sketch of the history of Louisville, see Croghan's *Journals*, in our volume i, p.136, note 106. – Ed.

[7] The seven stations formed on Beargrass Creek in the fall of 1779 and spring of 1780 were: Falls of the Ohio, Linnis, Sullivan's Old, Hoagland's, Floyd's, Spring, and Middle stations. Beargrass Creek, a small stream less than ten miles in length, flows in a northwestern trend and uniting with two smaller creeks, South and Muddy forks, enters the Ohio (not the Mississippi) immediately above the Falls of the Ohio (Louisville). – Ed.

into the Mississippi, and Louisville commenced its march to its present importance.

The view of the city from the Falls, as I have remarked, is not at all imposing; the view of the Falls from the city, on the contrary, is one of beauty and romance. They are occasioned by a parapet of limestone extending quite across the stream, which is here about one mile in width; and when the water is low the whole chain sparkles with bubbling foam-bells. When the stream is full the descent is hardly perceptible but for the increased rapidity of the current, which varies from ten to fourteen miles an hour.[8] Owing to the height of the freshet, this was the case

[8] It is only at high stages of the river that boats even of a smaller class can pass over the Falls. At other times they go through the "Louisville and Portland Canal." In 1804 the Legislature of Kentucky incorporated a company to cut a canal around the falls. Nothing effectual, however, beyond surveys, was done until 1825, when on the 12th of January of that year the Louisville and Portland Canal Company was incorporated by an act of the legislature, with a capital of $600,000, in shares of $100 each, with perpetual succession. 3665 of the shares of the company are in the hands of individuals, about seventy in number, residing in the following states: New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, New-York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri, and 2335 shares belong to the government of the United States.In December, 1825, contracts were entered into to complete the work of this canal within two years, for about $375,000, and under these contracts the work was commenced in March, 1826. Many unforeseen difficulties retarded the work until the close of the year 1828. At this time the contractors failed; new contracts were made at advanced prices, and the canal was finally opened for navigation December 5th, 1830. When completed it cost about $750,000. Owing to the advanced season at which it was opened, the deposites of alluvial earth at the lower extremity of the canal, or debouchure, could not be removed; and also from the action of the floods during the succeeding severe winter on the stones that had been temporarily deposited on the sides of the canal, causing them to be precipitated into the canal, it was not used to the extent that it

at the time when we descended them, and there was a wild

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otherwise would have been. During the year 1831, 406 steamboats, 46 keelboats, and 357 flatboats, measuring 76,323 tons, passed through the locks, which are about one fourth the number that would have passed if all the obstructions had been removed.The Louisville and Portland Canal is about two miles in length; is intended for steamboats of the largest class, and to overcome a fall of 24 feet, occasioned by an irregular ledge of limerock, through which the entire bed of the canal is excavated, a part of it, to the depth of 12 feet, is overlaid with earth. There is one guard and three lift locks combined, all of which have their foundation on the rock. One bridge of stone 240 feet long, with an elevation of 68 feet to top of the parapet wall, and three arches, the centre one of which is semi-elliptical, with a transverse diameter of 66, and a semi-conjugate diameter of 22 feet. The two side arches are segments of 40 feet span. The guard lock is 190 feet long in the clear, with semicircular heads of 26 feet in diameter, 50 feet wide, and 42 feet high, and contains 21,775 perches of mason-work. The solid contents of this lock are equal to 15 common locks, such as are built on the Ohio and New-York canals. The lift locks are of the same width with the guard lock, 20 feet high, and 183 feet long in the clear, and contain 12,300 perches of mason-work. The entire length of the walls, from the head of the guard lock to the end of the outlet lock, is 921 feet. In addition to the amount of mason-work above, there are three culverts to drain off the water from the adjacent lands, the mason-work of which, when added to the locks and bridge, give the whole amount of mason-work 41,989 perches, equal to about 30 common canal locks. The cross section of the canal is 200 feet at top of banks, 50 feet at bottom, and 42 feet high, having a capacity equal to that of 25 common canals; and if we keep in view the unequal quantity of mason-work compared to the length of the canal, the great difficulties of excavating earth and rock from so great a depth and width, together with the contingencies attending its construction from the fluctuations of the Ohio River, it may not be considered as extravagant in drawing the comparison between the work in this and in that of 70 or 75 miles of common canalling.In the upper sections of the canal, the alluvial earth to the average depth of twenty feet being removed, trunks of trees were found more or less decayed, and so imbedded as to indicate a powerful current towards the present shore, some of which were cedar, which is not now found in this region. Several *fireplaces* of a rude construction, with partially burnt wood, were discovered near the rock, as well as the bones of a variety of small animals and several human skeletons; rude implements formed of bone and

air of romance about the dark rushing waters: and the green

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stone were frequently seen, as also several well-wrought specimens of hematite of iron, in the shape of plummets or sinkers, displaying a knowledge in the arts far in advance of the present race of Indians.The first stratum of rock was a light, friable slate, in close contact with the limestone, and difficult to disengage from it; this slate did not, however, extend over the whole surface of the rock, and was of various thicknesses, from three inches to four feet.The stratum next to the slate was a close, compact limestone, in which petrified seashells and an infinite variety of coralline formations were imbedded, and frequent cavities of crystalline incrustations were seen, many of which still contained petroleum of a highly fetid smell, which gives the name to this description of limestone. This description of rock is on an average of five feet, covering a substratum of a species of cias limestone of a bluish colour, imbedding nodules of hornstone and organic remains. The fracture of this stone has in all instances been found to be irregularly conchoidal, and on exposure to the atmosphere and subjection to fire, it crumbles to pieces. When burnt and ground, and mixed with a due proportion of silicious sand, it has been found to make a most superior kind of hydraulic cement or water-lime.The discovery of this valuable limestone has enabled the canal company to construct their masonry more solidly than any other known in the United States.A manufactory of this hydraulic cement or water-lime is now established on the bank of the canal, on a scale capable of supplying the United States with this much-valued material for all works in contact with water or exposed to moisture; the nature of this cement being to harden in the water; the grout used on the locks of the canal is already *harder* than the *stone* used in their construction.After passing through the stratum which was commonly called the water-lime, about ten feet in thickness, the workmen came to a more compact mass of primitive gray limestone, which, however, was not penetrated to any great depth. In many parts of the excavation masses of a bluish white flint and hornstone were found enclosed in or incrusting the fetid limestone. And from the large quantities of arrow-heads and other rude formations of this flint stone, it is evident that it was made much use of by the Indians in forming their weapons for war and hunting; in one place a magazine of arrow-heads was discovered, containing many hundreds of these rude implements, carefully packed together and buried below the surface of the ground.The existence of iron ore in considerable quantities was exhibited in the progress of the excavation of the canal, by numerous highly-charged chalybeate springs that gushed out, and continued to flow during the time that the

woodlands upon either shore, overshadowed as they were by the shifting light and shade of the flitting clouds, cast over the scene a bewitching fascination. "*Corn Island*," with its legendary associations, rearing its dense clump of foliage as from the depths of the stream, was not the least beautiful object of the panorama; while the receding city, with its smoky roofs, its bustling quay, and the glitter and animation of an extended line of steamers, was alone necessary to fill up a scene for a limner.[9] And our steamer swept onward over the rapids, and threaded their maze of beautiful islands, and passed along the little villages at their foot and the splendid steamers along their shore, till twilight had faded, and the dusky mantle of departed day was flung over forest and stream.

Ohio River.

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rock was exposed, chiefly in the upper strata of limestone. —*Louisville Directory for 1835.*– Flagg.

[9] A circumstance, too, which adds not a little of interest to the spot, is the old Indian tradition that here was fought the last battle between their race and the former dwellers in Kentucky – the *white mound-builders*– in which the latter were exterminated to a man. True or false, vast quantities of human remains have, at low stages of the Ohio, been found upon the shores of Sandy Island, one mile below, and an extensive graveyard once existed in the vicinity of Shipping-port. – Flagg.

II

"How beautiful is this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!"

Manfred.

"The woods – oh! solemn are the boundless woods
Of the great Western World when day declines,
And louder sounds the roll of distant floods."

Hemans.

Long before the dawn on the morning succeeding our departure we were roused from our rest by the hissing of steam and the rattling of machinery as our boat moved slowly out from beneath the high banks and lofty sycamores of the river-side, where she had in safety been moored for the night, to resume her course. Withdrawing the curtain from the little rectangular window of my stateroom, the dark shadow of the forest was slumbering in calm magnificence upon the waters; and glancing upward my eye, the stars were beaming out in silvery brightness; while all along the eastern horizon, where

"The gray coursers of the morn
Beat up the light with their bright silver hoofs

And drive it through the sky,"

rested a broad, low zone of clear heaven, proclaiming the coming of a glorious dawn. The hated clang of the bell-boy was soon after heard resounding far and wide in querulous and deafening clamour throughout the cabins, vexing the dull ear of every drowsy man in the terrible language of Macbeth's evil conscience, "sleep no more!" In a very desperation of self-defence I arose. The mists of night had not yet wholly dispersed, and the rack and fog floated quietly upon the placid bosom of the stream, or ascended in ragged masses from the dense foliage upon its banks. All this melted gently away like "the baseless fabric of a vision," and "the beauteous eye of day" burst forth in splendour, lighting up a scene of unrivalled loveliness.

Much, very much has been written of "the beautiful Ohio;" the pens of an hundred tourists have sketched its quiet waters and its venerable groves; but there is in its noble scenery an ever salient freshness, which no description, however varied, can exhaust; new beauties leap forth to the eye of the man of sensibility, and even an humble pen may not fail to array them in the drapery of their own loveliness. There are in this beautiful stream features peculiar to itself, which distinguish it from every other that we have seen or of which we have read; features which render it truly and emphatically *sui generis*. It is not "the blue-rushing of the arrowy Rhone," with castled crags and frowning battlements; it is not the dark-rolling Danube, shadowy with the

legend of departed time, upon whose banks armies have met and battled; it is not the lordly Hudson, roaming in beauty through the ever-varying romance of the Catskill Highlands; nor is it the gentle wave of the soft-flowing Connecticut, seeming almost to sleep as it glides through the calm, "happy valley" of New-England: but it is that noble stream, bounding forth, like a young warrior of the wilderness, in all the joyance of early vigour, from the wild twin-torrents of the hills; rolling onward through a section of country the glory of a new world, and over the wooded heights of whose banks has rushed full many a crimson tide of Indian massacre. Ohio,[10] "*The River of Blood*," was its fearfully significant name from the aboriginal native; *La Belle Rivière* was its euphonious distinction from the simple Canadian voyageur, whose light pirogue first glided on its blue bosom. "The Beautiful River!" – it is no misnomer – from its earliest commencement to the broad *embouchure* into the turbid floods of the Mississippi, it unites every combination of scenic loveliness which even the poet's sublimated fancy could demand.[11] Now it sweeps along beneath its lofty bluffs in the conscious grandeur of resistless might; and then its clear, transparent waters glide in undulating ripples over the shelly bottoms and among the pebbly heaps of the white-drifted sand-bars, or in the calm magnificence of their

[10] *Kentucke* is said to have a similar meaning. – Flagg.

[11] Ohio is thought by some philologists to be a corruption of the Iroquois word, "Ohionhiio," meaning "beautiful river," which the French rendered as La Belle Rivière; see also Cuming's *Tour*, in our volume iv, p. 92, note 49. – Ed.

eternal wandering,

> "To the gentle woods all night
> Sing they a sleepy tune."

From either shore streams of singular beauty and euphonious names come pouring in their tribute through the deep foliage of the fertile bottoms; while the swelling, volumed outlines of the banks, piled up with ponderous verdure rolling and heaving in the river-breeze like life, recur in such grandeur and softness, and such ever-varying combinations of beauty, as to destroy every approach to monotonous effect. From the source of the Ohio to its outlet its waters imbosom more than an hundred islands, some of such matchless loveliness that it is worthy of remark that such slight allusion has been made to them in the numerous pencillings of Ohio scenery. In the fresh, early summertime, when the deep green of vegetation is in its luxuriance, they surely constitute the most striking feature of the river. Most of them are densely wooded to the water's edge; and the wild vines and underbrush suspended lightly over the waters are mirrored in their bosom or swept by the current into attitudes most graceful and picturesque. In some of those stretched-out, endless reaches which are constantly recurring, they seem bursting up like beautiful *bouquets* of sprinkled evergreens from the placid stream; rounded and swelling, as if by the teachings of art, on the blue bosom of the waters. A cluster of these "isles of light"

I well remember, which opened upon us the eve of the second day of our passage. Two of the group were exceedingly small, mere points of a deeper shade in the reflecting azure; while the third, lying between the former, stretched itself far away in a narrow, well-defined strip of foliage, like a curving gash in the surface, parallel to the shore; and over the lengthened vista of the waters gliding between, the giant branches bowed themselves, and wove their mingled verdure into an immense Gothic arch, seemingly of interminable extent, but closed at last by a single speck of crimson skylight beyond. Throughout its whole course the Ohio is fringed with wooded bluffs; now towering in sublime majesty hundreds of feet from the bed of the rolling stream, and anon sweeping inland for miles, and rearing up those eminences so singularly beautiful, appropriately termed "Ohio hills," while their broad alluvial plains in the interval betray, by their enormous vegetation, a fertility exhaustless and unrivalled. Here and there along the green bluffs is caught a glimpse of the emigrant's low log cabin peeping out to the eye from the dark foliage, sometimes when miles in the distance; while the rich maize-fields of the bottoms, the girdled forest-trees and the lowing kine betray the advance of civilized existence. But if the scenes of the Ohio are beautiful beneath the broad glare of the morning sunlight, what shall sketch their lineaments when the coarser etchings of the picture are mellowed down by the balmy effulgence of the midnight moon of summer! When her floods of light are streaming far and wide along the magnificent forest-

tops! When all is still – still! and sky, and earth, and wood, and stream are hushed as a spirit's breathing! When thought is almost audible, and memory is busy with the past! When the distant bluffs, bathed in molten silver, gleam like beacon-lights, and the far-off vistas of the meandering waters are flashing with the sheen of their ripples! When you glide through the endless maze, and the bright islets shift, and vary, and pass away in succession like pictures of the kaleidoscope before your eye! When imagination is awake and flinging forth her airy fictions, bodies things unseen, and clothes reality in loveliness not of earth! When a scene like this is developed, what shall adequately depict it? Not the pen.

Such, such is the beautiful Ohio in the soft days of early summer; and though hackneyed may be the theme of its loveliness, yet, as the dying glories of a Western sunset flung over the landscape the mellow tenderness of its parting smile, "fading, still fading, as the day was declining," till night's dusky mantle had wrapped the "woods on shore" and the quiet stream from the eye, I could not, even at the hazard of triteness, resist an inclination to fling upon the sheet a few hurried lineaments of Nature's beautiful creations.

There is not a stream upon the continent which, for the same distance, rolls onward so calmly, and smoothly, and peacefully as the Ohio. Danger rarely visits its tranquil bosom, except from the storms of heaven or the reckless folly of man, and hardly a river in the world can vie with it in safety, utility, or beauty.

Though subject to rapid and great elevations and depressions, its current is generally uniform, never furious. The forest-trees which skirt its banks are the largest in North America, while the variety is endless; several sycamores were pointed out to us upon the shores from thirty to fifty feet in circumference. Its alluvial bottoms are broad, deep, and exhaustlessly fertile; its bluffs are often from three to four hundred feet in height; its breadth varies from one mile to three, and its navigation, since the improvements commenced, under the authority of Congress, by the enterprising Shreve, has become safe and easy.[12] The classification of obstructions is the following: *snags*,

[12] At the age of twenty-five, Henry M. Shreve (1785-1854) was captain of a freight boat operating on the Ohio. In 1814 he ran the gauntlet of the British batteries at New Orleans, and carried supplies to Fort St. Phillip. The following year, in charge of the "Enterprise" he made the first successful steamboat trip from New Orleans to Louisville. Later he constructed the "Washington," making many improvements on the Fulton model. Fulton and Livingstone brought suit against him but lost in the action. May 24, 1824, at the instigation of J. C. Calhoun, then secretary of war, Congress appropriated seventy-five thousand dollars (not $105,000, as Flagg says) for the purpose of removing obstructions from the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. As early as 1821, Shreve had invented a device for removing snags and sawyers from river beds. But it was not until after two years' fruitless trials with a scheme devised by John Bruce of Kentucky, that Barbour, at Calhoun's suggestion, appointed Shreve superintendent of improvements on Western rivers (December 10, 1826). This position he held until September 11, 1841, when he was dismissed for political reasons. In the face of discouraging opposition Shreve constructed (1829) with government aid the snagboat "Heleopolis" with which he later wrought a marvellous improvement in navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi. From 1833 to 1838 he was engaged in removing the Red River "raft" for a distance of a hundred and sixty miles, thus opening that important river for navigation. For a good biography of Shreve, see the *Democratic Review*, xxii (New York, 1848), pp. 159-171, 241-251. A fair estimate of the importance of his

trees anchored by their roots; fragments of trees of various forms and magnitude; *wreck-heaps*, consisting of several of these stumps, and logs, and branches of trees lodged in one place; *rocks*, which have rolled from the cliffs, and varying from ten to one hundred cubic feet in size; and *sunken boats*, principally flat-boats laden with coal. The last remains one of the most serious obstacles to the navigation of the Ohio. Many steamers have been damaged by striking the wrecks of the *Baltimore*, the *Roanoke*, the *William Hulburt*,[13] and other craft, which were themselves snagged; while keel and flat-boats without number have been lost from the same cause.[14] Several thousands of the obstacles mentioned have been removed since improvements were commenced, and accidents from this cause are now less frequent. Some of the snags torn up from the bed of the stream, where they have probably for ages been buried, are said to have exceeded a diameter of six feet at the root, and were upward of an hundred feet in length. The removal of these obstructions on

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work can be gained from the following statistics; from 1822-27 the loss from snags alone, of property on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, including steam and flat-boats and their cargoes, amounted to $1,362,500; the like loss from 1827-32 was reduced to $381,000, although the volume of business had greatly increased. – Ed.

[13] The "Baltimore" (73 tons) was built at Pittsburg in 1828; the "Roanoke" (100 tons), at Wheeling in 1835. It is reported that from 1831 to 1833, of the sixty-six steamboats which went out of service, twenty-four were snagged, fifteen burned, and five destroyed by collision with other boats. See James Hall, *Notes on the Western States* (Philadelphia, 1838), p. 239. – Ed.

[14] The keel-boat Hindoo, with merchandise to the amount of $50,000, is a late instance. – Flagg.

the Ohio presents a difficulty and expense not encountered upon the Mississippi. In the latter stream, the root of the snag, when eradicated, is deposited in some deep pool or bayou along the banks, and immediately imbeds itself in alluvial deposite; but on the Ohio, owing to the nature of its banks in most of its course, there is no opportunity for such a disposal, and the boatmen are forced to blast the logs with gunpowder to prevent them from again forming obstructions. The cutting down and clearing away of all leaning and falling trees from the banks constitutes an essential feature in the scheme of improvement; since the facts are well ascertained that trees seldom plant themselves far from the spot where they fall; and that, when once under the power of the current, they seldom anchor themselves and form snags. The policy of removing the leaning and fallen trees is, therefore, palpable, since, when this is once thoroughly accomplished, no material for subsequent formation can exist. The construction of stone dams, by which to concentrate into a single channel all the waters of the river, where they are divided by islands, or from other causes are spread over a broad extent, is another operation now in execution. The dams at "Brown's Island,"[15] the shoalest point on the Ohio, have been so eminently successful as fully to establish the efficiency of the plan. Several other works of a similar character are proposed; a full survey of the stream,

[15] Brown's Island, two miles and a half long by half a mile at its greatest width, is located six or seven miles above Steubenville, Ohio, following the course of the river. – Ed.

hydrographical and topographical, is recommended; and, when all improvements are completed, it is believed that the navigation of the "beautiful Ohio" will answer every purpose of commerce and the traveller, from its source to its mouth, at the lowest stages of the water.

Ohio River.

III

"The sure traveller,
Though he alight sometimes, still goeth on."

Herbert.

"A RACE —
Now like autumnal leaves before the blast
Wide scattered."

Sprague.

Thump, thump, crash! One hour longer, and I was at length completely roused from a troublous slumber by our boat coming to a dead stop. Casting a glance from the window, the bright flashing of moonlight showed the whole surface of the stream covered with drift-wood, and, on inquiry, I learned that the branches of an enormous oak, some sixty feet in length, had become entangled with one of the paddle-wheels of our steamer, and forbade all advance.

We were soon once more in motion; the morning mists were dispersing, the sun rose up behind the forests, and his bright beams danced lightly over the gliding waters. We passed many pleasant little villages along the banks, and it was delightful to remove from the noise, and heat, and confusion below to the lofty

hurricane deck, and lounge away hour after hour in gazing upon the varied and beautiful scenes which presented themselves in constant succession to the eye. Now we were gliding quietly on through the long island chutes, where the daylight was dim, and the enormous forest-trees bowed themselves over us, and echoed from their still recesses the roar of our steam-pipe; then we were sweeping rapidly over the broad reaches of the stream, miles in extent; again we were winding through the mazy labyrinth of islets which fleckered the placid surface of the stream, and from time to time we passed the lonely cabin of the emigrant beneath the venerable and aged sycamores. Here and there, as we glided on, we met some relic of those ancient and primitive species of river-craft which once assumed ascendency over the waters of the West, but which are now superseded by steam, and are of too infrequent occurrence not to be objects of peculiar interest. In the early era of the navigation of the Ohio, the species of craft in use were numberless, and many of them of a most whimsical and amusing description. The first was the barge, sometimes of an hundred tons' burden, which required twenty men to force it up against the current a distance of six or seven miles a day; next the keel-boat, of smaller size and lighter structure, yet in use for the purposes of inland commerce; then the Kentucky flat, or broad-horn of the emigrant; the enormous ark, in magnitude and proportion approximating to that of the patriarch; the fairy pirogue of the French voyageur; the birch caïque of the Indian, and log skiffs, gondolas, and dug-outs of

the pioneer without name or number.[16] But since the introduction of steam upon the Western waters, most of these unique and primitive contrivances have disappeared; and with them, too, has gone that singular race of men who were their navigators. Most of the younger of the settlers, at this early period of the country, devoted themselves to this profession. Nor is there any wonder that the mode of life pursued by these boatmen should have presented irresistible seductions to the young people along the banks. Fancy one of these huge boats dropping lazily along with the current past their cabins on a balmy morning in June. Picture to your imagination the gorgeous foliage; the

[16] The keel-boat was usually from sixty to seventy feet long, and fifteen to eighteen broad at beam, with a keel extending from bow to stern, and had a draft of twenty to thirty inches. When descending the stream, the force of the current, with occasional aid from the pole, was the usual mode of locomotion. In ascending the stream, however, sails, poles, and almost every known device were used; not infrequently the vessel was towed by from twenty to forty men, with a rope several hundred feet in length attached to the mast. These boats were built in Pittsburg at a cost of two to three thousand dollars each.The barge was constructed for narrow, shallow water. As a rule it was larger than the keel-boat; but of less draft, and afforded greater accommodations for passengers.Broad-horn was a term generally applied to the Mississippi and Ohio flat-boat, which made its advent on the Western waters later than the barge or the keel-boat. It was a large, unwieldy structure, with a perfectly flat bottom, perpendicular sides, and usually covered its entire length. It was used only for descending the stream."The earliest improvement upon the canoe was the pirogue, an invention of the whites. Like the canoe, this is hewed out of the solid log; the difference is, that the pirogue has greater width and capacity, and is composed of several pieces of timbers – as if the canoe was sawed lengthwise into two equal sections, and a broad flat piece of timber inserted in the middle, so as to give greater breadth of beam to the vessel." Hall, *Notes on the Western States*, p. 218. – Ed.

soft, delicious temperature of the atmosphere; the deep azure of the sky; the fertile alluvion, with its stupendous forests and rivers; the romantic bluffs sleeping mistily in blue distance; the clear waters rolling calmly adown, with the woodlands outlined in shadow on the surface; the boat floating leisurely onward, its heterogeneous crew of all ages dancing to the violin upon the deck, flinging out their merry salutations among the settlers, who come down to the water's edge to see the pageant pass, until, at length, it disappears behind a point of wood, and the boatman's bugle strikes up its note, dying in distance over the waters; fancy a scene like this, and the wild bugle-notes echoing and re-echoing along the bluffs and forest shades of the beautiful Ohio, and decide whether it must not have possessed a charm of fascination resistless to the youthful mind in these lonely solitudes. No wonder that the severe toils of agricultural life, in view of such scenes, should have become tasteless and irksome.[17] The lives of these boatmen were lawless and dissolute to a proverb. They frequently stopped at the villages along their course, and passed the night in scenes of wild revelry and merriment. Their occupation, more than any other, subjected them to toil, and exposure, and privation; and, more than any other, it indulged them, for days in succession, with leisure, and ease, and indolent gratification. Descending the stream, they floated quietly along without an effort, but in ascending against the powerful current their life was an uninterrupted series of toil. The boat, we are

[17] Flint. – Flagg.

told, was propelled by poles, against which the shoulder was placed and the whole strength applied; their bodies were naked to the waist, for enjoying the river-breeze and for moving with facility; and, after the labour of the day, they swallowed their whiskey and supper, and throwing themselves upon the deck of the boat, with no other canopy than the heavens, slumbered soundly on till the morning. Their slang was peculiar to the race, their humour and power of retort was remarkable, and in their frequent battles with the squatters or with their fellows, their nerve and courage were unflinching.

It was in the year 1811 that the steam-engine commenced its giant labours in the Valley of the West, and the first vessel propelled by its agency glided along the soft-flowing wave of the beautiful river.[18] Many events, we are told, united to render this year a most remarkable era in the annals of Western history.[19] The spring-freshet of the rivers buried the whole valley from Pittsburgh to New-Orleans in a flood; and when the waters subsided unparalleled sickness and mortality ensued. A mysterious spirit of restlessness possessed the denizens of the Northern forests, and in myriads they migrated towards the South and West. The magnificent comet of the year, seeming, indeed,

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[18] For an account of the first steamboat on the Ohio, see Flint's *Letters*, in our volume ix, p. 154, note 76. – Ed.

[19] Latrobe. – Flagg.*Comment by Ed.* Charles J. Latrobe (1801-75) visited the United States in 1832-33. His *Rambles in North America in 1832-3* (New York, 1835) and *Rambles in Mexico* (New York and London, 1836) have much value in the history of Western travel.

to verify the terrors of superstition, and to "shake from its horrid hair pestilence and war," all that summer was beheld blazing along the midnight sky, and shedding its lurid twilight over forest and stream; and when the leaves of autumn began to rustle to the ground, the whole vast Valley of the Mississippi rocked and vibrated in earthquake-convulsion! forests bowed their heads; islands disappeared from their sites, and new one's rose; immense lakes and hills were formed; the graveyard gave up its sheeted and ghastly tenants; huge relics of the mastodon and megalonyx, which for ages had slumbered in the bosom of earth, were heaved up to the sunlight; the blue lightning streamed and the thunder muttered along the leaden sky, and, amid all the elemental war, the mighty current of the "Father of Waters" for hours rolled back its heaped-up floods towards its source! All this was the prologue to that mighty drama of *Change* which, from that period to the present, has been sweeping over the Western Valley; it was the fearful welcome-home to that all-powerful agent which has revolutionized the character of half a continent; for at that epoch of wonders, and amid them all, the first steamboat was seen descending the great rivers, and the awe-struck Indian on the banks beheld the *Pinelore* flying through the troubled waters.[20]

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[20] The first steamer upon the waters of the Red River was of a peculiar construction: her steam scape-pipe, instead of ascending perpendicularly from the hurricane deck, projected from the bow, and terminated in the form of a serpent's head. As this monster ascended the wilds of the stream, with her furnaces blazing, pouring forth steam with a roar, the wondering Choctaws upon the banks gave her the poetic and appropriate name of *Pinelore*, "the Fire-Canoe." – Flagg.

The rise and progress of the steam-engine is without a parallel in the history of modern improvement. Fifty years ago, and the prophetic declaration of Darwin was pardoned only as the enthusiasm of poetry; it is now little more than the detail of reality:

> "Soon shall thy arm, unconquer'd steam, afar
> Drag the slow barge or drive the rapid car;
> Or on wide-waving wings expanded bear
> The flying chariot through the fields of air;
> Fair crews triumphant, leaning from above,
> Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move,
> Or warrior bands alarm the gaping crowd,
> And armies shrink beneath the shadowy cloud."[21]

The steam-engine, second only to the press in power, has in a few years anticipated results throughout the New World which centuries, in the ordinary course of cause and event, would have failed to produce. The dullest forester, even the cold, phlegmatic native of the wilderness, gazes upon its display of beautiful mechanism, its majestic march upon its element, and its sublimity of power, with astonishment and admiration.

Return we to the incidents of our passage. During the morning of our third day upon the Ohio we passed, among others, the

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[21] This quotation is from *Botanic Gardens*, book i, chapter i, by Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802). – Ed.

villages of *Rome*, *Troy*, and Rockport.[22] The latter is the most considerable place of the three, notwithstanding *imposing* titles. It is situated upon a green romantic spot, the summit of a precipitous pile of rocks some hundred feet in height, from which sweeps off a level region of country in the rear. Here terminates that series of beautiful bluffs commencing at the confluence of the mountain-streams, and of which so much has been said. A new geological formation commences of a bolder character than any before; and the face of the country gradually assumes those features which are found near the mouth of the river. Passing Green River with its emerald waters,[23] its "Diamond Island,"[24] the largest in the Ohio, and said to be *haunted*, and very many thriving villages, among which was Hendersonville,[25] for some time the residence of Audubon,[26] the ornithologist, we found

[22] For Rome, see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 160, note 77. – Ed.

[23] Green River, rising in central Kentucky, flows west through the coal fields to its junction with the Big Barren; thence it turns north, and empties into the Ohio nine miles above Evansville, Indiana. Beginning with 1808 the state legislature expended large sums of money for improving navigation on Green River. As a consequence small steamboats may ascend it to a distance of more than a hundred and fifty miles. The length of the stream is estimated at three hundred and fifty miles. – Ed.

[24] Diamond Island, densely wooded, is located thirty-six miles below the mouth of Green River, and seven miles above Mount Vernon. Its name is perhaps derived from its shape, being five miles long and one and a half wide. – Ed.

[25] For note on Hendersonville, see Cuming's *Tour*, in our volume iv, p. 267, note 175. – Ed.

[26] John J. Audubon, born in Louisiana (1780), was a son of a wealthy French naval officer; his mother was a Spanish Creole. Educated in France, he returned to America (1798) and settled near Philadelphia, devoting his time to the study of birds. In 1808

ourselves near midday at the mouth of the smiling Wabash, its high bluffs crowned with groves of the walnut and pecan, the *carya olivæformis* of Nuttal, and its deep-died surface reflecting the yet deeper tints of its verdure-clad banks, as the far-winding stream gradually opened upon the eye, and then retreated in the distance. The confluence of the streams is at a beautiful angle; and, on observing the scene, the traveller will remark that the forests upon one bank are superior in magnitude to those on the other, though of the same species. The appearance is somewhat singular, and the fact is to be accounted for only from the reason that the soil differs in alluvial character. It has been thought that no stream in the world, for its length and magnitude, drains a more fertile and beautiful country than the Wabash and its tributaries.[27] Emigrants are rapidly settling its banks, and a route has been projected for uniting by canal its waters with those of Lake Erie; surveys by authority of the State of Indiana have been made, and incipient measures taken preparatory to carrying the work into execution.[28]

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he went west and until 1824 made fruitless attempts to establish himself in business in Kentucky and Louisiana. He issued in London (1827-38) his noted publication on the *Birds of America*, which was completed in eighty-seven parts. During 1832-39 he published five volumes entitled *Ornithological Biographies*. Audubon died in 1851. See M. R. Audubon, *Audubon and his Journals* (New York, 1897). – Ed.

[27] For the historical importance of the Wabash River, see Croghan's *Journals*, in our volume i, p. 137, note 107. – Ed.

[28] The Wabash and Erie Canal, which connects the waters of Lake Erie with the Ohio River by way of the Maumee and Wabash rivers, has played an active rôle in the development of Indiana, her most important cities being located upon its route.

About one hundred miles from the mouth of the Wabash is situated the village of New-Harmony, far famed for the singular events of which it has been the scene.[29] It is said to be situated on a broad and beautiful plateau overlooking the stream, surrounded by a fertile and heavily-timbered country, and blessed with an atmosphere of health. It was first settled in 1814 by a religious sect of Germans called Harmonites, resembling the Moravians in their tenets, and under the control of George Rapp, in whose name the land was purchased and held. They were about eight hundred in number, and soon erected a number of substantial edifices, among which was a huge House of Assemblage an hundred feet square. They laid out their grounds with beautiful regularity, and established a botanic garden and an extensive greenhouse. For ten years the Harmonites continued to live and labour in love, in the land of their adoption, when the celebrated Robert Dale Owen,[30] of Scotland, came among them,

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The Ohio section was constructed during the years 1837-43, and the Indiana section as far as Lafayette in 1832-40; the canal being later continued to Terre Haute and the Ohio River near Evansville. Although the federal government granted Indiana 1,505,114 acres for constructing the canal, the state was by this work plunged heavily in debt. After the War of Secession the canal lost much of its relative importance for commerce. June 14, 1880, Congress authorized the secretary of war to order a survey and estimate of cost and practicability of making a ship canal out of the old Wabash and Erie Canal. The survey and estimate were made, but the matter was allowed to drop. See *Senate Docs.*, 46 Cong., 3 sess., iii, 55. – Ed.

[29] For an account of New Harmony and its founder, George Rapp, see Hulme's *Journal*, in our volume x, p. 50, note 22, and p. 54, note 25. – Ed.

[30] Flagg is evidently referring to Robert Owen, the active promoter of the scheme. A brief history of his activities is given in Hulme's *Journal*, in our volume x, p. 50,

and, at the sum of one hundred and ninety thousand dollars, purchased the establishment entire. His design was of rearing up a community upon a plan styled by him the "Social System." The peculiar doctrines he inculcated were a perfect equality, moral, social, political, and religious. He held that the promise of never-ending love upon marriage was an absurdity; that children should become no impediment to separation, as they were to be considered members of the community from their second year; that the society should have no professed religion, each individual being indulged in his own faith, and that all temporal possessions should be held in common. On one night of every week the whole community met and danced; and on another they united in a concert of music, while the Sabbath was devoted to philosophical lectures. Many distinguished individuals are said to have written to the society inquiring respecting its principles and prospects, and expressing the wish at a future day to unite with it their destinies. Mr. Owen was sanguine of success. On the 4th of July, 1826, he promulgated his celebrated declaration of mental independence;[31] a document which, for absurdity, has never, perhaps, been paralleled. But all was in vain. Dissension insinuated itself among the members; one after another dropped

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note 22.For Robert Dale Owen see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxiv, p. 133, note 128. – Ed.

[31] "Declaration of Mental Independence" delivered by Robert Owen (not Robert Dale Owen) on July 4, 1826, was printed in the New Harmony *Gazette* for July 12, 1826. An extended quotation is given in George B. Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities* (Marion, Indiana, 1902), p. 163. – Ed.

off from the community, until at length Mr. Owen retired in disgust, and, at a vast sacrifice, disposed of the establishment to a wealthy Scotch gentleman by the name of M'Clure, a former coadjutor.[32] Thus was abandoned the far-famed *social system*, which for a time was an object of interest and topic of remark all over the United States and even in Europe. The Duke of Saxe Weimar passed here a week in the spring of 1826, and has given a detailed and amusing description of his visit.

About ten miles below the mouth of the Wabash is situated the village of Shawneetown, once a favourite dwelling-spot of the turbulent Shawnee Indian, the tribe of Tecumseh.[33] Quite a village once stood here; but, for some cause unknown, it was forsaken previous to its settlement by the French, and two small mounds are the only vestige of its existence which are now to be seen. A trading-post was established by the early Canadian voyageurs; but, on account of the sickliness of the site, was abandoned, and the spot was soon once more a wilderness. In the early part of 1812 a land-office was here located, and two years subsequent a town was laid off by authority of Congress, and the lots sold as other public lands. Since then it has been gradually becoming the commercial emporium of southern Illinois.

The buildings, among which are a very conspicuous bank,

[32] For an account of William Maclure, see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 163, note 81.In reference to the Duke of Saxe Weimar, see Wyeth's *Oregon*, in our volume xxi, p. 71, note 47. – Ed.

[33] On Shawneetown and the Shawnee Indians see our volume i, p. 23, note 13, and p. 138, note 108. – Ed.

courthouse, and a land-office for the southern district of Illinois, are scattered along upon a gently elevated bottom, swelling up from the river to the bluffs in the rear, but sometimes submerged. From this latter cause it has formerly been subject to disease; it is now considered healthy; is the chief commercial port in this section of the state, and is the principal point of debarkation for emigrants for the distant West. Twelve miles in its rear are situated the Gallatin Salines, from which the United States obtains some hundred thousands of bushels of salt annually.[34] It is manufactured by the evaporation of salt water. This is said to abound over the whole extent of this region, yielding from one eighth to one twelfth of its weight in pure muriate of soda. In many places it bursts forth in perennial springs; but most frequently is obtained by penetrating with the augur a depth of from three to six hundred feet through the solid limestone substratum, when a copper tube is introduced, and the strongly-impregnated fluid gushes violently to the surface. In the vicinity of these salines huge fragments of earthenware, apparently of vessels used in obtaining salt, and bearing the impress of wickerwork, have been thrown up from a considerable depth below the surface. Appearances of the same character exist near Portsmouth, in the State of Ohio, and other places. Their origin is a mystery! the race which formed them is departed![35]

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[34] For a brief statement on the salines, see James's *Long's Expedition*, in our volume xiv, p. 58, note 11. – Ed.

[35] An excellent account of the Mound Builders is given by Lucien Carr in

Ohio River.

Smithsonian Institution *Report*, 1891 (Washington, 1893), pp. 503-599; see also Cyrus Thomas, "Report on Mound Explorations" in United States Bureau of Ethnology *Report* (1890-91). – Ed.

IV

"Who can paint
Like Nature? Can imagination boast,
Amid its gay creations, hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blooms?"

Thomson.

"Precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shattered, and the same forever."

Coleridge.

It was near noon of the third day of our passage that we found ourselves in the vicinity of that singular series of massive rock formations, stretching along for miles upon the eastern bank of the stream. The whole vast plain, extending from the Northern Lakes to the mouth of the Ohio, and from the Alleghany slope to the boundless prairies of the far West, is said by geologists to be supported by a bed of horizontal limestone rock, whose deep strata have never been completely pierced, though penetrated many hundred feet by the augur. This limestone is hard, stratified, imbedding innumerable shells

of the terebratulæ, encrinites, orthocerites, trilobites, productus, and other species. Throughout most of its whole extent it supports a stratum of bituminous coal, various metals, and saline impregnations: its constant decomposition has fertilized the soil, and its absorbent and cavernous nature has prevented swamps from accumulating upon the surface. Such, in general outline, is this vast limerock substratum of the Western Valley. It generally commences but a few feet below the vegetable deposite; at other places its range is deeper, while at intervals it rises from the surface, and frowns in castellated grandeur over objects beneath. These huge masses of limestone sometimes exhibit the most picturesque and remarkable forms along the banks of the western rivers, and are penetrated in many places by vast caverns. The region we were now approaching was a locality of these singular formations, and for miles before reaching it, as has been remarked, a change in scenery upon the eastern bank is observed. Instead of the rounded wooded summits of the "Ohio hills" sweeping beautifully away in the distance, huge, ponderous rocks, heaped up in ragged masses, "Pelion upon Ossa," are beheld rearing themselves abruptly from the stream, and expanding their Briarean arms in every direction. Some of these cliffs present a uniform, jointed surface, as if of masonry, resembling ancient edifices, and reminding the traveller of the giant ruins of man's creations in another hemisphere, while others appear just on the point of toppling into the river. Among this range of crags is said to hang an *iron coffin*, suspended,

like Mohammed's, between heaven and earth. It contains the remains of a man of singular eccentricity, who, previous to his decease, gave orders that they should be deposited thus; and the gloomy object at the close of the year, when the trees are stripped of their foliage, may be perceived, it is said, high up among the rocks from the deck of the passing steamer. This story probably owes its origin to an event of actual occurrence somewhat similar, at a cliff called by the river-pilots "Hanging Rock."[36] It is situated in the vicinity of "Blennerhasset's Island."[37] The first of these singular cliffs, called "Battery Rock," stretches along the river-bank for half a mile, presenting a uniform and perpendicular façade upward of eighty feet in height. The appearance is striking, standing, as it does, distinct from anything of a kindred character for miles above and for some distance below. Passing several fine farms, which sweep down to the water's edge, a second range of cliffs are discovered, similar to those described in altitude and aspect; but near the base, through the dark cypresses skirting the water, is perceived the ragged entrance to a large cavernous fissure, penetrating the bluff, and designated by the name of "Rock-Inn-Cave."[38] It is said to have received this significant appellation from emigrants, who were

[36] Hanging Rock is the name given to a high sandstone escarpment on the right bank of the river, three miles below Ironton, Ohio. – Ed.

[37] Blennerhasset's Island is two miles below Parkersburg, West Virginia. For its history, see Cuming's *Tour*, in our volume iv, p. 129, note 89. – Ed.

[38] A brief description of Rock Inn Cave (or Cave-in-Rock) may be found in Cuming's *Tour*, in our volume iv, p. 273, note 180. – Ed.

accustomed to tarry with their families for weeks at the place when detained by stress of weather, stage of the river, or any other circumstance unfavourable to their progress.

It was near noon of a beautiful day when the necessary orders for landing were issued to the pilot, and our boat rounded up to the low sand-beach just below this celebrated cavern. As we strolled along the shore beneath "the precipitous, black, jagged rocks" overhanging the winding and broken pathway towards the entrance, we could not but consider its situation wild and rugged enough to please the rifest fancy. The entrance, at first view, is exceedingly imposing; its broad massive forehead beetling over the visiter for some yards before he finds himself within. The mouth of the cavern looks out upon the stream rushing along at the base of the cliff, and is delightfully shaded by a cluster of cypresses, rearing aloft their huge shafts, almost concealed in the luxuriant ivy-leaves clinging to their bark. The entrance is formed into a semi-elliptical arch, springing boldly to the height of forty feet from a heavy bench of rock on either side, and eighty feet in width at the base, throwing over the whole a massive roof of uniform concavity, verging to a point near the centre of the cave. Here may be seen another opening of some size, through which trickles a limpid stream, and forming an entrance to a second chamber, said to be more extensive than that below. The extreme length of this cavern is given by Schoolcraft[39] as one

[39] For Schoolcraft, see Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*, in our volume xx, p. 286, note 178. – Ed.

hundred and sixty feet, the floor, the roof, and the walls gradually tapering to a point. The rock is a secondary limestone, abounding with testacea and petrifactions, a fine specimen of which I struck from the ledge while the rest of our party were recording their names among the thousand dates and inscriptions with which the walls are defaced.

Like all other curiosities of Nature, this cavern was, by the Indian tribes, deemed the residence of a *Manito*[40] or spirit, evil or propitious, concerning whom many a wild legend yet lives among their simple-hearted posterity. They never pass this dwelling-place of the divinity without discharging their guns (an ordinary mark of respect), or making some other offering propitiatory of his favour. These tributary acknowledgments, however, are never of much value. The view of the stream from the left bench at the cave's mouth is most beautiful. Immediately in front extends a large and densely-wooded island, known by the name of the Cave, while the soft-gliding waters flow between, furnishing a scene of natural beauty worthy an Inman's pencil; and, if I mistake not, an engraving of the spot has been published, a ferocious-looking personage, pistol in hand, crouched at the entrance, eagerly watching an ascending boat. This design originated, doubtless, in the tradition yet extant, that in the latter part of the last century this cavern was the rendezvous

[40] It is a remarkable circumstance, that this term is employed to signify the *same* thing by all the tribes from the Arkansas to the sources of the Mississippi; and, according to Mackenzie, throughout the Arctic Regions. – Flagg.

of a notorious band of freebooters which then infested the region, headed by the celebrated Mason,[41] plundering the boats ascending from New-Orleans and murdering their crews. From these circumstances this cave has become the scene of a poem of much merit, called the "Outlaw," and has suggested a spirited tale from a popular writer. Many other spots in the vicinity were notorious, in the early part of the present century, for the murder and robbery of travellers, whose fate long remained enveloped in mystery. On the summit of a lofty bluff, not far from the "Battery Rock," was pointed out to us a solitary house, with a single chimney rising from its roof. Its white walls may be viewed for miles before reaching the place on descending the river. It was here that the family of Sturdevant carried on their extensive operations as counterfeiters for many years unsuspected; and on this spot, in 1821, they expiated their crimes with their lives. A few miles below is a place called "Ford's Ferry,"[42] where murder, robbery, forgery, and almost every crime in the calendar were for years committed, while not a suspicion of the truth was awakened. Ford not only escaped unsuspected, but was esteemed a most exemplary man. Associated with him were his son and two other individuals, named Simpson and Shouse. They are all now gone to their account. The old man was

[41] See Cuming's *Tour*, in our volume iv, p. 268. – Ed.

[42] Ford's Ferry is today a small hamlet in Crittenden County, Kentucky, twenty-five miles below Shawneetown. Flagg is referring probably to the Wilson family. Consult Lewis Collins, *History of Kentucky* (Covington, 1874), i. p. 147. – Ed.

mysteriously shot by some person who was never discovered, but was supposed to have been Simpson, between whom and himself a misunderstanding had arisen. If it were so, the murderer was met by fitting retribution, for *he* fell in a similar manner. Shouse and the son of Ford atoned upon the gallows their crimes in 1833. Before reaching this spot the traveller passes a remarkable mass of limestone called "Tower Rock." It is perpendicular, isolated, and somewhat cylindrical in outline. It is many feet in altitude, and upon its summit tradition avers to exist the ruins of an antique tumulus; an altar, mayhap, of the ancient forest-sons, where

> "Garlands, ears of maize, and skins of wolf
> And shaggy bear, the offerings of the tribe
> Were made to the Great Spirit."

In the vicinity of the cliff called "Tower Rock," and not far from Hurricane Island, is said to exist a remarkable cavern of considerable extent. The cave is entered by an orifice nine feet in width and twelve feet high; a bench of rock is then ascended a few feet, and an aperture of the size of an ordinary door admits the visiter into a spacious hall. In the mouth of the cavern, on the façade of the cliff, at the altitude of twenty-five feet, are engraved figures resembling a variety of animals, as the bear, the buffalo, and even the lion and lioness. All this I saw nothing of, and am, of course, no voucher for its existence; but a writer in the Port Folio, so long since as 1816, states the fact, and, moreover,

adds that the engraving upon the rock was executed in "a masterly style."[43]

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[43] Since the remarks relative to "the remarkable cavern in the vicinity of *Tower Rock*, and not far from Hurricane Island," were in type, the subjoined notice of a similar cave, probably the same referred to, has casually fallen under my observation. The reader will recognise in this description the outlines of *Rock-Inn-Cave*, previously noticed. It is not a little singular that none of our party, which was a numerous one, observed the "hieroglyphics" here alluded to. The passage is from Priest's "American Antiquities.""*A Cavern of the West, in which are found many interesting Hieroglyphics, supposed to have been made by the Ancient Inhabitants.*"On the Ohio, twenty miles below the mouth of the Wabash, is a cavern in which are found many hieroglyphics and representations of such delineations as would induce the belief that their authors were indeed comparatively refined and civilized. It is a cave in a rock, or ledge of the mountain, which presents itself to view a little above the water of the river when in flood, and is situated close to the bank. In the early settlement of Ohio this cave became possessed by a party of Kentuckians called 'Wilson's Gang.' Wilson, in the first place, brought his family to this cave, and fitted it up as a spacious dwelling; erected a *signpost* on the water side, on which were these words: 'Wilson's Liquor Vault and House of Entertainment.' The novelty of such a tavern induced almost all the boats descending the river to call for refreshments and amusement. Attracted by these circumstances, several idle characters took up their abode at the cave, after which it continually resounded with the shouts of the licentious, the clamour of the riotous, and the blasphemy of gamblers. Out of such customers Wilson found no difficulty in forming a band of robbers, with whom he formed the plan of murdering the crews of every boat that stopped at his tavern, and of sending the boats, manned by some of his party, to New-Orleans, and there sell their loading for cash, which was to be conveyed to the cave by land through the States of Tennessee and Kentucky; the party returning with it being instructed to murder and rob on all good occasions on the road."After a lapse of time the merchants of the upper country began to be alarmed on finding their property make no returns, and their people never coming back. Several families and respectable men who had gone down the river were never heard of, and the losses became so frequent that it raised, at length, a cry of individual distress and general dismay. This naturally led to an inquiry, and large rewards were offered for the discovery of the perpetrators of such unparalleled crimes. It soon came out that

From this spot the river stretches away in a long delightful

Wilson, with an organized party of forty-five men, was the cause of such waste of blood and treasure; that he had a station at Hurricane Island to arrest every boat that passed by the mouth of the cavern, and that he had agents at Natchez and New-Orleans, of presumed respectability, who converted his assignments into cash, though they knew the goods to be stolen or obtained by the commission of murder."The publicity of Wilson's transactions soon broke up his party; some dispersed, others were taken prisoners, and he himself was killed by one of his associates, who was tempted by the reward offered for the head of the captain of the gang."This cavern measures about twelve rods in length and five in width; its entrance presents a width of eighty feet at its base and twenty-five feet high. The interior walls are smooth rock. The floor is very remarkable, being level through the whole length of its centre, the sides rising in stony grades, in the manner of seats in the pit of a theatre. On a diligent scrutiny of the walls, it is plainly discerned that the ancient inhabitants at a very remote period had made use of the cave as a house of deliberation and council. The walls bear many hieroglyphics well executed, and some of them represent animals which have no resemblance to any now known to natural history."This cavern is a great natural curiosity, as it is connected with another still more gloomy, which is situated exactly above, united by an aperture of about fourteen feet, which, to ascend, is like passing up a chimney, while the mountain is yet far above. Not long after the dispersion and arrest of the robbers who had infested it, in the upper vault were found the skeletons of about sixty persons, who had been murdered by the gang of Wilson, as was supposed."But the tokens of antiquity are still more curious and important than a description of the mere cave, which are found engraved on the sides within, an account of which we proceed to give:"The sun in different stages of rise and declension; the moon under various phases; a snake biting its tail, and representing an orb or circle; a viper; a vulture; buzzards tearing out the heart of a prostrate man; a panther held by the ears by a child; a crocodile; several trees and shrubs; a fox; a curious kind of hydra serpent; two doves; several bears; two scorpions; an eagle; an owl; some quails; *eight* representations of animals which are now unknown. Three out of the eight are like the elephant in all respects except the tusk and the tail. Two more resemble the tiger; one a wild boar; another a sloth; and the last appears a creature of fancy, being a quadruman instead of a quadruped; the claws being alike before and behind, and in the act of conveying something to the mouth, which lay in the centre of the monster. Besides these were

reach, studded with beautiful islands, among which "Hurricane Island," a very large one, is chief.[44] Passing the compact little village of Golconda with its neat courthouse, and the mouth of the Cumberland River with its green island, once the rendezvous of Aaron Burr and his chivalrous band, we next reached the town of Paducah, at the outlet of the Tennessee.[45] This is a place of importance,[46] though deemed unhealthy: it is said to have derived its name from a captive Indian woman, who was here sacrificed by a band of the Pawnees after having been assured of safety. About eight miles below Paducah are situated the ruins of Fort Massac, once a French military post of importance.[47] There is a singular legend respecting this fort still popular among the inhabitants of the neighbouring region, the outlines of which are the following: The fortress was erected by the

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several fine representations of men and women, *not naked*, but clothed; not as the Indians, but much in the costume of Greece and Rome." – Flagg.*Comment by Ed.* This same account is given by Collins (*op. cit.*, in note 40), and is probably true.

[44] Hurricane Island, four miles below Cave-in-Rock, is more than five miles in length. The "Wilson gang" for some time used this island for a seat of operation. – Ed.

[45] Golconda is the seat of Pope County, Illinois. See Woods's *English Prairie*, in our volume x, p. 327, note 77.On or just before Christmas, 1806, Aaron Burr came down the Cumberland River from Nashville and joined Blennerhasset, Davis Floyd, and others who were waiting for him at the mouth of the river, and together they started on Burr's ill-fated expedition (December 28, 1806). Their united forces numbered only nine batteaux and sixty men. See W. F. McCaleb, *Aaron Burr's Conspiracy* (New York, 1903), p. 254 ff.For a short account of Paducah, see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 203, note 110. – Ed.

[46] It has since been nearly destroyed by fire. – Flagg.

[47] On Fort Massac, see A. Michaux's *Travels*, in our volume iii, p. 73, note 139. – Ed.

French while securing possession of the Western Valley, and, soon after, hostilities arising between them and the natives, the latter contrived a stratagem, in every respect worthy the craft and subtlety of the race, to obtain command of this stronghold. Early one morning a body of Indians, enveloped each in a bearskin, appeared upon the opposite bank of the Ohio. Supposing them the animal so faithfully represented, the whole French garrison in a mass sallied incontinently forth, anticipating rare sport, while the remnant left behind as a guard gathered themselves upon the glacis as spectators of the scene. Meanwhile, a large body of Indians, concealed in rear of the fort, slipped silently from their ambush, and few were there of the French who escaped to tell the tale of the scene that ensued. They were *massacred* almost to a man, and hence the name of *Massac* to the post. During the war of the revolution a garrison was stationed upon the spot for some years, but the structures are now in ruins. A few miles below is a small place consisting of a few farmhouses, called Wilkinsonville,[48] on the site where Fort Wilkinson once stood; just opposite, along the shore, commences the "Grand Chain" of rocks so famous to the Ohio pilot, extending four miles. The little village of Caledonia is here laid off among the bluffs. It has a good landing, and is the proposed site of a marine hospital.

[48] Wilkinsonville, named for General James Wilkinson, was a small hamlet located on the site of the Fort Wilkinson of 1812, twenty-two miles above Cairo. Two or three farm houses are today the sole relics of this place; see Thwaites, *On the Storied Ohio*, p. 291.Caledonia is still a small village in Pulaski County, Illinois. Its post-office is Olmstead. – Ed.

It was sunset when we arrived at the confluence of the rivers. In course of the afternoon we had been visited by a violent thunder-gust, accompanied by hail. But sunset came, and the glorious "bow of the covenant" was hung out upon the dark bosom of the clouds, spanning woodland and waters with its beautiful hues. And yet, though the hour was a delightful one, the scene did not present that aspect of vastness and sublimity which was anticipated from the celebrity of the streams. For some miles before uniting its waters with the Mississippi, the Ohio presents a dull and uninteresting appearance. It is no longer the clear, sparkling stream, with bluffs and woodland painted on its surface; the volume of its channel is greatly increased by its union with two of its principal tributaries, and its waters are turbid; its banks are low, inundated, and clothed with dark groves of deciduous forest-trees, and the only sounds which issue from their depths to greet the traveller's ear are the hoarse croakings of frogs, or the dull monotony of countless choirs of moschetoes. Thus rolls on the river through the dullest, dreariest, most uninviting region imaginable, until it sweeps away in a direction nearly southeast, and meets the venerable Father of the West advancing to its embrace. The volume of water in each seems nearly the same; the Ohio exceeds a little in breadth, their currents oppose to each other an equal resistance, and the resultant of the forces is a vast lake more than two miles in breadth, where the united waters slumber quietly and magnificently onward for leagues in a common bed. On

the right come rolling in the turbid floods of the Mississippi; and on looking upon it for the first time with preconceived ideas of the magnitude of the mightiest river on the globe, the spectator is always disappointed. He considers only its breadth when compared with the Ohio, without adverting to its vast depth. The Ohio sweeps in majestically from the north, and its clear waters flow on for miles without an intimate union with its turbid conqueror. The characteristics of the two streams are distinctly marked at their junction and long after. The banks of both are low and swampy, totally unfit for culture or habitation. "Willow Point," which projects itself into the confluence, presents an elevation of twenty feet; yet, in unusual inundations, it is completely buried six feet below the surface, and the agitated waters, rolling together their masses, form an enormous lake. How strange it seemed, while gazing upon the view I have attempted to delineate, now fading away beneath the summer twilight – how very strange was the reflection that these two noble streams, deriving their sources in the pellucid lakes and the clear icy fountains of their highland-homes, meandering majestically through scenes of nature and of art unsurpassed in beauty, and draining, and irrigating, and fertilizing the loveliest valley on the globe – how strange, that the confluence of the waters of such streams, in their onward rolling to the deep, should take place at almost the only stage in their course devoid entirely of interest to the eye or the fancy; in the heart of a dreary and extended swamp, waving with the gloomy boughs

of the cypress, and enlivened by not a sound but the croaking of bullfrogs, and the deep, surly misery note of moschetoes! Willow Point is the property of a company of individuals, who announce it their intention to elevate the delta above the power of inundations, and here to locate a city.[49] There are as yet, however, but a few storehouses on the spot; and when we consider the incalculable expense the only plan for rendering it habitable involves, we can only deem the idea of a city here as the chimera of a Utopian fancy. For more than twelve miles above the confluence, the whole alluvion is annually inundated, and forbids all improvement; but were this site an elevated one, a city might here be founded which should command the immense commerce of these great rivers, and become the grand central emporium of the Western Valley.

Upon the first elevated land above the confluence stands the little town called America. This is the proposed *terminus* to the grand central railroad of the Internal Improvement scheme of Illinois, projected to pass directly through the state,[50] uniting its

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[49] For account of the attempt at settlements at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi, see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 204, note 111. – Ed.

[50] For America see Ogden's *Letters*, our volume xix, p. 44, note 30, and Woods's *English Prairie*, our volume x, p. 327, note 77.The scheme known as the "Internal Improvement Policy" was authorized over the governor's veto by the Illinois general assembly on February 27, 1837, in response to the popular clamor for its adoption. The object was to open the country for immigration and hasten its natural development by constructing railroads and canals as yet not needed commercially. Ten million two hundred thousand dollars were appropriated by the act, including two hundred thousand dollars to be given directly to the counties not favored. Surveys were made,

northern extremity with the southern. The town is said to have been much retarded in its advancement by the circumstance of a sand-bar obstructing the landing. It has been contemplated to cut a basin, extending from the Ohio to a stream called "Humphrey's Creek," which passes through the place, and thus secure a harbour. Could this plan be carried into execution, America would soon become a town of importance.

Ohio River.

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and speculation was rife. Then followed a collapse, and six million five hundred thousand dollars were added to the state debt. The scheme was later referred to as the General Insanity Bill. – Ed.

V

"The groves were God's first temples."

Bryant.

"Oh! it's hame, and it's hame, it's hame wad I be,
Hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie."

Cunningham.

"Those Sabbath bells, those Sabbath bells,
I hear them wake the hour of prime."

Lamb.

"She walks the waters like a thing of life."

Byron.

It was late before we had passed the confluence of the Ohio with the dark-rolling tide of the "endless river," and the mellow gorgeousness of summer sunset had gently yielded to the duskiness of twilight, and that to the inky pall of night. The moon had not risen, and the darkness became gradually so dense that doubts were entertained as to the prudence of

attempting to stem the mighty current of the Mississippi on such a night. These, however, were overruled; and, sweeping around the low peninsula of Cairo, our steamer met the torrent and quivered in every limb. A convulsed, motionless struggle ensued, in which the heavy labouring of the engine, the shrill whistle of the safety-valve, the quick, querulous crackling of the furnaces, the tumultuous rushing of the wheels, and the stern roar of the scape-pipe, gave evidence of the fearful power summoned up to overcome the flood. At length we began very slowly to ascend the stream. Our speed was about five miles an hour, and the force of the current nearly the same, which so impedes advancement that it requires as long to ascend from the confluence to St. Louis as to descend to the same point from the Falls, though the distance is less than half. All night our steamer urged herself slowly onward against the current, and the morning found us threading a narrow channel amid a cluster of islands, from whose dense foliage the night-mists were rising and settling in dim confusion. Near the middle of the stream, above this collection, lays a very large island, comprising eight or ten thousand acres. It is called English Island;[51] is heavily timbered; huge vines of the wild grape are leaping like living things from branch to branch, and the wild pea flourishes all over the surface of the soil in most luxuriant profusion. The stream here expands itself to the breadth of four

[51] The English Island of 1836 is probably the Power's Island of today. It is three miles long, and forms a part of Scott County, Missouri, more than twenty miles above Cairo. – Ed.

miles, and abounds with islands.

As the morning advanced the sun burst gloriously forth from the mists; and as I gazed with tranquillized delight upon the beautiful scenery it unrolled, I remembered that it was the morning of the Sabbath – the peaceful Sabbath. It is a sweet thing to pass the hours of holy time amid the eloquent teachings of inanimate nature. It is pleasant to yield up for a season the sober workings of reason to the warm gushings of the heart, and to suffer the homage of the soul to go up before the Author of its being unfettered by the chill formalities, the bustling parade, the soulless dissembling of the unbending courtesies of ordinary life. Amid the crowded assemblage, there is but little of that humbleness of spirit and that simple-hearted fervour of worship which it is in man to feel when communing within the shadowy solitudes of Nature with his God. There are moments, too, when the soul of man is called back from the heartlessness of life, and pours forth its emotions, gush upon gush, in all the hallowed luxuriance of its nature; when, from the fevered turmoil of daily existence, it retires to well up its sympathies alone beneath the covert of a lulled and peaceful bosom; and surely such a season is the calm, waveless hour of Sabbath sacredness. And it is a blessed appointment that, in a world whose quietude too often is disturbed by the untamed heavings of unholy feeling, there should yet be moments when the agitated events of the past are forgotten, when the apprehensions of the future are unthought of, and the generous emotions of the heart are no more repressed.

Such moments are the crystal fount of the *oasis*, girt, indeed, by the sands and barrenness of the desert; yet laughing forth in tinkling melody amid its sprinkled evergreens, in all the sparkling freshness of mimic life, to bathe the languid lip of the weary one. Such moments are the mellow radiance of the departing sun when the trials of the day are over; and tenderly and softly do their influences descend upon the heart. Like the pure splendour of the star of even, how calmly does the sacred Sabbath-time beam out from the dark, unquiet firmament of life! 'Tis the blessed rainbow of promise and of consolation amid the rough storms of our pilgrimage, and its holy influences elicit all the untold richness of the heart. It is a season soft as the memorial of buried affection, mild as the melody of departed years, pure as the prayer of feebleness from the lip of childhood, beautiful as yon floating islet sleeping in sunset radiance on the blue evening wave. "Gone, gone for ever!" Another Sabbath is over, and from its gathering shades it is good to cast back a glance of reflection.

A company of emigrants, in course of the morning, were landed from our boat at a desolate-looking spot upon the Missouri shore; men, women, and little ones, with slaves, household stuff, pots, kettles, dogs, implements of husbandry, and all the paraphernalia of the backwood's farm heaped up promiscuously in a heterogeneous mass among the undergrowth beneath the lofty trees. A similar party from the State of Vermont were, during our passage, landed near the mouth of the Wabash, one of whom was a pretty, delicate female, with an infant boy in

her arms. They had been *deck-passengers*, and we had seen none of them before; yet their situation could not but excite interest in their welfare. Poor woman! thought I, as our boat left them gazing anxiously after us from the inhospitable bank, little do you dream of the trials and the privations to which your destiny conducts, and the hours of bitter retrospection which are to come over your spirit like a blight, as, from these cheerless solitudes, you cast back many a lingering thought to your dear, distant home in New-England; whose very mountain-crags and fierce storms of winter, harsh and unwelcome though they might seem to the stranger, were yet pleasant to you:

> "My native land! my native land!
> Though bare and bleak thou be,
> And scant and cold thy summer smile,
> Thou'rt all the world to me."

A few years, and all this will have passed away. A new home and new ties will have sprung up in the wilderness to soothe the remembrance of the old. This broad valley will swarm with population; the warm breath of man will be felt upon the cheek, and his tread will be heard at the side; the glare of civilization and the confused hum of business will have violated these solitudes and broken in upon their gloom, and here empire shall have planted her throne; and then, perchance, that playful boy upon the bosom may rise to wield the destinies of his fellows. But many a year of toil and privation must

first have passed away; and who shall record their annals? A thousand circumstances, all unlooked for, will seize upon the feelings of the emigrant; the harshness of strangers, the cold regard of recent acquaintance, the absence of relatives and of friends long cherished, the distance which separates him from his native home, and the dreary time which must elapse between all communications of the pen. And then the sweet chime of the Sabbath-bell of New-England, pealing out in "angels' music"[52] on the clear mountain-air, to usher in the hours of holy time, and to summon the soul of man to communion with its Maker; will this be heard amid the forest solitude? and all that quiet intermingling of heart with heart which divests grief of half its bitterness by taking from it all its loneliness? And the hour of sickness, and of death, and of gushing tears, as they come to all, may not be absent here; and where are the soothing consolations of religious solemnity, and the sympathies of kindred souls, and the unobtrusive condolence of those who alone may enter the inner temple of the breast, where the stranger intermeddleth not? Yes, it must be – notwithstanding the golden anticipations indulged by every humble emigrant to this El Dorado of promise – it must be that there will arise in his bosom, when he finds himself for the first time amid these vast forest solitudes, attended only by his wife and children, a feeling of unutterable loneliness and desertion. Until this moment he has been sustained by the buoyancy of anticipated success, the excitement of change, the

[52] Herbert. – Flagg.

enlivening influences of new and beautiful scenes; and the effect of strange faces and strange customs has been to divert the attention, while the farewell pressure of affection yet has warmly lingered. All this is over now, and his spirit, left to its own resources, sinks within him. The sacred spot of his nativity is far, far away towards the morning sun; and there is the village church and the village graveyard, hallowed by many a holy remembrance; there, too, are the playmates and the scenes of his boyhood-days; the trysting-place of youthful love and of youthful friendship, spots around which are twined full many a tendril of his heart; and he has turned from them all *for ever*. Henceforth he is a wanderer, and a distant soil must claim his ashes. He who, with such reflections, yearns not for the home of his fathers, is an alien, and no true son of New-England.

It was yet early in the morning of our first day upon the Mississippi that we found ourselves beneath the stately bluff upon which stands the old village of Cape Girardeau.[53] Its site is a bold bank of the stream, gently sloping to the water's edge, upon a substratum of limerock. A settlement was commenced on this spot in the latter part of the last century. Its founders were of French and German extraction, though its structures do not betray their origin. The great earthquakes of 1811, which vibrated through the whole length of the Western Valley, agitated the site of this village severely; many brick houses were shattered,

[53] For a sketch of Cape Girardeau, see A. Michaux's *Travels*, in our volume iii, p. 80, note 154. – Ed.

chimneys thrown down, and other damage effected, traces of the repairs of which are yet to be viewed. The place received a shock far more severe, however, in the removal of the seat of justice to another town in the county: but the landing is an excellent one; iron ore and other minerals are its staples of trade, and it is again beginning to assume a commercial character. The most remarkable objects which struck our attention in passing this place were several of those peculiarly novel mills put in motion by a spiral water-wheel, acted on by the current of the river. These screw-wheels float upon the surface parallel to the shore, rising or falling with the water, and are connected with the gearing in the millhouse upon the bank by a long shaft. The action of the current upon the spiral thread of the wheel within its external casing keeps it in constant motion, which is communicated by the shaft to the machinery of the mills. The contrivance betrays much ingenuity, and for purposes where a *motive* of inconsiderable power is required, may be useful; but for driving heavy millstones or a saw, the utility is more than problematical.

In the vicinity of Cape Girardeau commences what is termed the "Tyowapity Bottom," a celebrated section of country extending along the Missouri side of the stream some thirty miles, and abounding with a peculiar species of potter's clay, unctuous in its nature, exceedingly pure and white, and plastic under the wheel.[54] This stratum of clay is said to vary from

[54] A superior quality of kaolin, or china clay, is mined in large quantities in Cape

one foot to ten in depth, resting upon sandstone, and covered by limestone abounding in petrifactions. A manufactory is in operation at Cape Girardeau, in which this substance is the material employed. Near the northern extremity of this bottom the waters of the Muddy River enter the Mississippi from Illinois.[55] This stream was discovered by the early French voyageurs, and from them received the name of *Rivière au Vase*, or *Vaseux*. It is distinguished for the salines upon its banks, for its exhaustless beds of bituminous coal, for the fertility of the soil, and for a singularly-formed eminence among the bluffs of the Mississippi, a few miles from its mouth. Its name is "*Fountain Bluff*," derived from the circumstance that from its base gush out a number of limpid springs.[56] It is said to measure eight miles in circumference, and to have an altitude of several hundred feet. Its western declivity looks down upon the river, and its northern side is a precipitous crag, while that upon the south slopes away to a fertile plain, sprinkled with farms.

A few miles above the Big Muddy stands out from the Missouri shore a huge perpendicular column of limestone, of

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Girardeau County. Marble ninety-nine per cent pure, is procured in abundance. – Ed.

[55] "Muddy River," usually called "Big Muddy," is the English translation of the French *Rivière au Vase*, or *Vaseux*. Formed by the union of two branches rising in Jefferson County, Illinois, it flows in a southwesterly direction and empties into the Mississippi about twenty-five miles above Cape Girardeau. It is one hundred and forty miles long. – Ed.

[56] Fountain Bluff is six miles above the mouth of the Big Muddy. Flagg's descriptions are in the main accurate. – Ed.

cylindrical formation, about one hundred feet in circumference at the base, and in height one hundred and fifty feet, called the "Grand Tower."[57] Upon its summit rests a thin stratum of vegetable mould, supporting a shaggy crown of rifted cedars, rocking in every blast that sweeps the stream, whose turbid current boils, and chafes, and rages at the obstruction below. This is the first of that celebrated range of heights upon the Mississippi usually pointed out to the tourist, springing in isolated masses from the river's brink upon either side, and presenting to the eye a succession of objects singularly grotesque. There are said to exist, at this point upon the Mississippi, indications of a huge parapet of limestone having once extended across the stream, which must have formed a tremendous cataract, and effectually inundated all the alluvion above. At low stages of the water ragged shelves, which render the navigation dangerous, are still to be seen. Among the other cliffs along this precipitous range which have received names from the boatmen are the "Devil's Oven," "Teatable," "Backbone," &c., which, with the "Devil's Anvil," "Devil's Island," &c., indicate pretty plainly the divinity most religiously propitiated in

[57] Grand Tower, seventy-five feet high, and frequently mentioned by early writers, is a mile above the island of the same name, at the mouth of the Big Muddy, and stands out some distance from the Missouri side. Grand Tower Island was an object of much dread to boatmen during the days of early navigation on the Mississippi. A powerful current sweeping around Devil's Oven, frequently seized frail or unwieldy craft to dash it against this rock. Usually the boatmen landed, and by means of long ropes towed their vessels along the Illinois side, past this perilous rock. – Ed.

these dangerous passes.[58] The "Oven" consists of an enormous promontory of rock, about one hundred feet from the surface of the river, with a hemispherical orifice scooped out of its face, probably by the action, in ages past, of the whirling waters now hurrying on below. It is situated upon the left bank of the stream, about one mile above the "Tower," and is visible from the river. In front rests a huge fragment of the same rock, and in the interval stands a dwelling and a garden spot. The "Teatable" is situated at some distance below, and the other spots named are yet lower upon the stream. This whole region bears palpable evidence of having been subjected, ages since, to powerful volcanic and diluvial action; and neither the Neptunian or Vulcanian theory can advance a superior claim.

For a long time after entering the dangerous defile in the vicinity of the *Grand Tower*, through which the current rushes like a racehorse, our steamer writhed and groaned against the torrent, hardly advancing a foot. At length, as if by a single tremendous effort, which caused her to quiver and vibrate to her centre, an onward impetus was gained, the boat shot forward, the rapids were overcome, and then, by chance, commenced one of those perilous feats of rivalry, formerly, more than at

[58] The Mississippi between the mouth of the Kaskaskia River and Cape Girardeau offered many obstructions to early navigation. As at Grand Tower, the boatmen frequently found it necessary to land and tow their boats past the dangerous points, and here the Indians would lie in ambush to fall upon the unfortunate whites. The peril of these places doubtless lent color to their nomenclature. Flagg's descriptions are fairly accurate except in the matter of dimensions, wherein he tends to exaggeration. – Ed.

present, frequent upon the Western waters, a race. Directly before us, a steamer of a large class, deeply laden, was roaring and struggling against the torrent under her highest pressure. During our passage we had several times passed and repassed each other, as either boat was delayed at the various woodyards along the route; but now, as the evening came on, and we found ourselves gaining upon our antagonist, the excitement of emulation flushed every cheek. The passengers and crew hung clustering, in breathless interest, upon the galleries and the boiler deck, wherever a post for advantageous view presented; while the hissing valves, the quick, heavy stroke of the piston, the sharp clatter of the *eccentric*, and the cool determination of the pale engineer, as he glided like a spectre among the fearful elements of destruction, gave evidence that the challenge was accepted. But there was one humble individual, above all others, whose whole soul seemed concentrated in the contest, as from time to time, in the intervals of toil, his begrimed and working features were caught, glaring through the lurid light of the furnaces he was feeding. This was no less a personage than the doughty fireman of our steamer; a long, lanky individual, with a cute cast of the eye, a knowing tweak of the nose, and an interminable longitude of phiz. His checkered shirt was drenched with perspiration; a huge pair of breeches, begirdling his loins by means of a leathern belt, covered his nether extremities, and two sinewy arms of "whipcord and bone" held in suspension a spadelike brace of hands. During our passage, more than once did I avail myself

of an opportunity of studying the grotesque, good-humoured visage of this *unique* individual; and it required no effort of fancy to imagine I viewed before me some lingering remnant of that "horse and alligator race," now, like the poor Indian, fast fading from the West before the march of steamboats and civilization, *videlicet*, "the Mississippi boatman." And, on the occasion of which I speak, methought I could catch no slight resemblance in my interesting fireman, as he flourished his ponderous limbs, to that faithful portraiture of his majesty of the Styx in Tooke's Pantheon! though, as touching this latter, I must confess me of much dubiety in boyhood days, with the worthy "gravedigger" Young, having entertained shrewd suspicions whether the "tyrant ever sat."

But in my zeal for the honest Charon I am forgetting the exciting subject of the race. During my digression, the ambitious steamers have been puffing, and sweating, and glowing in laudable effort, to say nothing of stifled sobs said to have issued from their labouring bosoms, until at length a grim smile of satisfaction lighting up the rugged features of the worthy Charon, gave evidence that not in vain he had wielded his mace or heaved his wood. A dense mist soon after came on, and the exhausted steamers were hauled up at midnight beneath the venerable trees upon the banks of the stream. On the first breakings of dawn all was again in motion. But, alas! alas! in spite of all the strivings of our valorous steamer, it soon became but too evident that her mighty rival must prevail, as with distended jaws, like to some

huge fish, she came rushing up in our wake, as if our annihilation were sure. But our apprehensions proved groundless; like a civil, well-behaved rival, she speeded on, hurling forth a triple bob-major of curses at us as she passed, doubtless by way of salvo, and disappeared behind a point. When to this circumstance is added that a long-winded racer of a mail-boat soon after swept past us in her onward course, and left us far in the rear, I shall be believed when it is stated that the steamer on which we were embarked was distinguished for anything but speed; a circumstance by none regretted *less* than by myself.

Mississippi River.

VI

"I linger yet with Nature."

Manfred.

"Onward still I press,
Follow thy windings still, yet sigh for more."

Goethe.

"God's my life, did you ever hear the like!
What a strange man is this!"

Ben Jonson.

But a very few years have passed away since the navigation of the Mississippi was that of one of the most dangerous streams on the globe; but, thanks to the enterprising genius of the scientific Shreve, this may no longer with truth be said. In 1824 the first appropriation[59] was voted by Congress for improving the navigation of the Western rivers; and since that period thousands of snags, sawyers, planters, sand-bars, sunken rocks, and fallen trees have been removed, until all that now remains is to prevent new obstacles from accumulating where the old have

[59] $105,000. – Flagg.

been eradicated. For much of its course in its lower sections, the Mississippi is now quite safe; and as the progress of settlements advances upon its banks, the navigation of this noble stream will doubtless become unobstructed in its whole magnificent journey from the falls of the "Laughing Water" to the Mexican Gulf. The indefatigable industry, the tireless perseverance, the indomitable enterprise, and the enlarged and scientific policy of Captain Shreve, the projector and accomplisher of the grand national operations upon the Western rivers, can never be estimated beyond their merit. The execution of that gigantic undertaking, the removal of the Red River Raft, has identified his history with that of the empire West;[60] his fame will endure so long as those magnificent streams, with which his name is associated, shall continue to roll on their volumed waters to the deep.

These remarks have been suggested by scenes of constant recurrence to the traveller on the Mississippi. The banks, the forests, the islands all differ as much as the stream itself from those of the soft-gliding Ohio. Instead of those dense emerald masses of billowy foliage swelling gracefully up from the banks of "the beautiful river," those of the Mississippi throw back a rough, ragged outline; their sands piled with logs and uprooted trees, while heaps of wreck and drift-wood betray the wild ravages of the stream. In the midst of the mass a single enormous sycamore often rears its ghastly limbs, while at its foot springs

[60] For Red River raft, see James's Long's *Expedition*, in our volume xvii, p. 70, note 64. – Ed.

gracefully up a light fringe of the pensile willow. Sometimes, too, a huge sawyer, clinging upon the verge of the channel, heaves up its black mass above the surface, then falls, and again rises with the rush of the current. Against one of these sawyers is sometimes lodged a mass of drift-wood, pressing it firmly upon the bottom, till, by a constant accumulation, a foundation is gradually laid and a new island is formed: this again, by throwing the water from its course, causes a new channel, which, infringing with violence upon the opposite bank, undermines it with its colonnade of enormous trees, and thus new material in endless succession is afforded for obstructions to the navigation. The deposites of alluvion along the banks betray a similar origin of gradual accumulation by the annual floods. In some sections of the American Bottom,[61] commencing at its southern extremity with the Kaskaskia River, the mould, upward of thirty feet in depth, is made up of numerous strata of earth, which may be readily distinguished and counted by the colours.

About twenty miles above the mouth of the Kaskaskia is situated Ste. Genevieve, grand deposite of the lead of the celebrated ancient mines *La Motte*, and *A'Burton*, and others, some thirty miles in the interior, and the market which supplies all the mining district of the vicinity.[62] It was first commenced

[61] In reference to the American Bottom, see Ogden's *Letters*, in our volume xix, p. 62, note 48. – Ed.

[62] For an account of Ste. Genevieve, see Cuming's *Tour*, in our volume iv, p. 266, note 174. According to Austin, cited below, La Motte (or La Mothe) Cadillac, governor of Louisiana, went on an expedition (1715) to the Illinois in search of silver, and found

about the year 1774 by the original settlers of Upper Louisiana; and the Canadian French, with their descendants, constitute a large portion of its present inhabitants. The population does not now exceed eight hundred, though it is once said to have numbered two thousand inhabitants. Some of the villagers are advanced in years, and among them is M. Valle, one of the chief proprietors of *Mine la Motte*, who, though now some ninety years of age, is almost as active as when fifty.[63] Ste. Genevieve

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lead ore in a mine which had been shown him fifteen miles west of the Mississippi. It is believed by some authorities that this was the famous "Mine la Mothe," at the head of the St. Francis River. Schoolcraft, however, says that Philip Francis Renault, having received mining grants from the French government, left France in 1719, ascended the Mississippi, established himself the following year near Kaskaskia, and sent out small companies in search of precious metals; and that La Mothe, who had charge of one of these companies, soon discovered the mine that still bears his name. It was operated only at intervals, until after the American occupation, when its resources were developed. Under the Spanish domination (1762-1800), little was done to develop the mine. In 1763, however, Francis Burton discovered the "Mine à Burton," on a branch of Mineral Fork. Like the "Mine la Mothe," it was known to the Indians before the discovery by the whites, and both are still operated. Burton was said to have been alive in 1818, at the age of a hundred and six; see Colonel Thomas Benton's account of him in St. Louis *Enquirer*, October 16, 1818.For an account of primitive mining operations, see Thwaites, *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, xiii, pp. 271-292; Moses Austin, "Lead Mines of Ste. Geneviève and St. Louis Counties," *American State Papers* (*Public Lands*), iii, pp. 609-613; and H. R. Schoolcraft, *Lead Mines of Missouri* (New York, 1819). – Ed.

[63] From 1738 to 1744, the mines were considered as public property: but in the year last mentioned François Vallé received from the French government a grant of two thousand arpents of land (1,666 acres) including "Mine la Mothe," and eighteen years later twenty-eight thousand arpents (23,333 acres) additional. At Vallé's death the land passed to his sons, François and John, and Joseph Pratt, a transfer confirmed by Congress in 1827. The next year it was sold to C. C. Vallé, L. E. Linn, and Everett

is situated about one mile from the Mississippi, upon a broad alluvial plain lying between the branches of a small stream called *Gabourie*. Beyond the first bottom rises a second steppe, and behind this yet a third, attaining an elevation of more than a hundred feet from the water's edge. Upon this elevated site was erected, some twenty years since, a handsome structure of stone, commanding a noble prospect of the river, the broad American Bottom on the opposite side, and the bluffs beyond the Kaskaskia. It was intended for a literary institution; but, owing to unfavourable reports with regard to the health of its situation, the design was abandoned, and the edifice was never completed. It is now in a state of "ruinous perfection," and enjoys the reputation, moreover, of being *haunted*. In very sooth, its aspect, viewed from the river at twilight, with its broken windows outlined against the western sky, is wild enough to warrant such an idea or any other. A courthouse and Catholic chapel constitute the public buildings. To the south of the village, and lying upon the river, is situated the common field, originally comprising two thousand *arpens*; but it is now much less in extent, and is yearly diminishing from the action of the current upon the alluvial banks. These common fields were granted by the Spanish government, as well as by the French, to every village settled under their domination. A single enclosure at the expense of the villagers was erected and kept in repair, and the lot of every individual was separated from

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Pratt. In 1830 it was sold in part and the remainder leased. In 1868 the estate passed from the hands of the Vallés. – Ed.

his neighbour's by a double furrow. Near this field the village was formerly located; but in the inundation of 1785, called by the old *habitans* "*L'annee des grandes eaux*," so much of the bank was washed away that the settlers were forced to select a more elevated site. The Mississippi was at this time swelled to thirty feet above the highest water-mark before known; and the town of Kaskaskia and the whole American Bottom were inundated.

Almost every description of minerals are to be found in the county, of which Ste. Genevieve is the seat of justice. But of all other species, iron ore is the most abundant. The celebrated *Iron Mountain* and the *Pilot Knob* are but forty miles distant.[64] Abundance of coal is found in the opposite bluffs in Illinois. About twelve miles from the village has been opened a quarry of beautiful white marble, in some respects thought not inferior to that of Carrara. There are also said to be immense caves of pure white sand, of dazzling lustre, quantities of which are transported to Pittsburg for the manufacture of flint glass. There are a number of beautiful fountains in the neighbourhood, one of which is said to be of surpassing loveliness. It is several yards square, and rushes up from a depth of fifteen or twenty feet, enclosed upon three sides by masses of living rock, over which,

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[64] Pilot Knob is a conical-shaped hill, a mile in diameter, in Iron County, Missouri, seventy-five miles southwest of St. Louis, and is rich in iron ore. In the War of Secession it was the scene of a battle between General Sterling Price and General Hugh B. Ewing (September 26, 27, 1864).Iron Mountain is an isolated knob of the St. François Mountains in St. François County, eighty miles south of St. Louis. One of the richest and purest iron mines in the United States is found there. – Ed.

in pensile gracefulness, repose the long glossy branches of the forest trees.

The early French settlers manufactured salt a few miles from the village, at a saline formerly occupied by the aborigines, the remains of whose earthen kettles are yet found on the spot. About thirty years since a village of the Peoria Indians was situated where the French common field now stands;[65] and from the ancient mounds found in the vicinity, and the vast quantities of animal and human remains, and utensils of pottery exhumed from the soil, the spot seems to have been a favourite location of a race whose destiny, and origin, and history are alike veiled in oblivion. The view of Ste. Genevieve from the water is picturesque and beautiful, and its landing is said to be superior to any between the mouth of the Ohio and the city of St. Louis. The village has that decayed and venerable aspect characteristic of all these early French settlements.

As we were passing Ste. Genevieve an accident occurred which had nearly proved fatal to our boat, if not to the lives of all on board of her. A race which took place between another steamer and our own has been noticed. In some unaccountable manner, this boat, which then passed us, fell again in the rear, and now, for the last hour, had been coming up in our wake under high steam. On overtaking us, she attempted, contrary to all rules

[65] The Peoria were one of the five principal tribes of the Illinois Confederation. They resided around the lake in the central portion of Illinois, which bears their name. In 1832 they were removed to Kansas, and in 1854 to Indian Territory, where, united with other tribes, they still reside. – Ed.

and regulations for the navigation of the river provided, to pass between our boat and the bank beneath which we were moving; an outrage which, had it been persisted in a moment longer than was fortunately the case, would have sent us to the bottom. For a single instant, as she came rushing on, contact seemed inevitable; and, as her force was far superior to our own, and the recklessness of many who have the guidance of Western steamers was well known to us all, the passengers stood clustering around upon the decks, some pale with apprehension, and others with firearms in their hands, flushed with excitement, and prepared to render back prompt retribution on the first aggression. The pilot of the hostile boat, from his exposed situation and the virulent feelings against him, would have met with certain death; and he, consequently, contrary to the express injunctions of the master, reversed the motion of the wheels just at the instant to avoid the fatal encounter. The sole cause for this outrage, we subsequently learned, was a private pique existing between the pilots of the respective steamers. One cannot restrain an expression of indignant feeling at such an exhibition of foolhardy recklessness. It is strange, after all the fearful accidents of this description upon the Western waters, and that terrible prodigality of human life which for years past has been constantly exhibited, there should yet be found individuals so utterly regardless of the safety of their fellow-men, and so destitute of every emotion of generous feeling, as to force their way heedlessly onward into danger, careless of any issue save the paltry gratification

of private vengeance. It is a question daily becoming of more startling import, How may these fatal occurrences be successfully opposed? Where lies the fault? Is it in public sentiment? Is it in legal enactment? Is it in individual villany? However this may be, our passage seemed fraught with adventure, of which this is but an incident. After the event mentioned, having composed the agitation consequent, we had retired to our berths, and were just buried in profound sleep, when crash – our boat's bow struck heavily against a snag, which, glancing along the bottom, threw her at once upon her beams, and all the passengers on the elevated side from their berths. No serious injury was sustained, though alarm and confusion enough were excited by such an unceremonious turn-out. The dismay and tribulation of some of our worthy company were entirely too ludicrous for the risibles of the others, and a hearty roar of cachinnation was heard even above the ejaculations of distress; a very improper thing, no doubt, and not at all to be recommended on such occasions, as one would hardly wish to make a grave "unknell'd and uncoffin'd" in the Mississippi, with a broad grin upon his phiz.

In alluding to the race which took place during our passage, honourable mention was made of a certain worthy individual whose vocation was to feed the furnaces; and one bright morning, when all the others of our company had bestowed themselves in their berths because of the intolerable heat, I took occasion to visit the sooty Charon in the purgatorial realms over which he

wielded the sceptre. "Grievous work this building fires under a sun like that," was the salutation, as my friend the fireman had just completed the toilsome operation once more of stuffing the furnace, while floods of perspiration were coursing down a chest hairy as Esau's in the Scripture, and as brawny. Hereupon honest Charon lifted up his face, and drawing a dingy shirt sleeve with emphasis athwart his eyes, bleared with smut, responded, "Ay, ay, sir; it's a sin to Moses, such a trade;" and seizing incontinently upon a fragment of tin, fashioned by dint of thumping into a polygonal dipper of unearthly dimensions, he scooped up a quantity of the turbid fluid through which we were moving, and deep, deep was the potation which, like a succession of rapids, went gurgling down his throat. Marvellously refreshed, the worthy genius dilated, much to my edification, upon the glories of a fireman's life. "Upon this hint I spake" touching the topic of our recent race; and then were the strings of the old worthy's tongue let loose; and vehemently amplified he upon "our smart chance of a gallop" and "the slight sprinkling of steam he had managed to push up." "Ah, stranger, I'll allow, and couldn't I have teetotally obfusticated her, and right mightily used her up, hadn't it been I was sort of bashful as to keeping path with such a cursed old mud-turtle! But it's all done gone;" and the droughty Charon seized another swig from the unearthly dipper; and closing hermetically his lantern jaws, and resuming his *infernal* labours, to which those of Alcmena's son or of Tartarean Sysiphus were trifles, I had the discretion to betake

myself to the upper world.

During the night, after passing Ste. Genevieve, our steamer landed at a woodyard in the vicinity of that celebrated old fortress, Fort Chartres, erected by the French while in possession of Illinois; once the most powerful fortification in North America, but now a pile of ruins.[66] It is situated about three miles from *Prairie de Rocher*, a little antiquated French hamlet, the scene of one of Hall's Western Legends.[67] We could see nothing of the old fort from our situation on the boat; but its vast ruins, though now a shattered heap, and shrouded with forest-trees of more than half a century's growth, are said still to proclaim in their finished and ponderous masonry its ancient grandeur and strength. In front stretches a large island in the stream, which has received from the old ruin a name. It is not a little surprising that there exists no description of this venerable pile worthy its origin and eventful history.

Mississippi River.

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[66] For a short account of Fort Chartres, see A. Michaux's *Travels*, in our volume iii, p. 71, note 136. – Ed.

[67] For Prairie du Rocher see A. Michaux's *Travels*, in our volume iii, p. 70, note 133. The legend referred to is, "Michel de Couce" by James Hall, in his *Legends of the West.*Contrary to Flagg's statement that there exists no description of Fort Chartres worthy of its history, Philip Pittman, who visited the place in 1766, gives a good detailed description of the fort in his *Present State of the European Settlements on the Missisippi* (London, 1770), pp. 45, 46. – Ed.

VII

"The hills! our mountain-wall, the hills!"

Alpine Omen.

"But thou, exulting and abounding river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever,
Could man but leave thy bright creation so – "

Childe Harold.

There are few objects upon the Mississippi in which the geologist and natural philosopher may claim a deeper interest than that singular series of limestone cliffs already alluded to, which, above its junction with the Ohio, present themselves to the traveller all along the Missouri shore. The principal ridge commences a few miles above Ste. Genevieve; and at sunrise one morning we found ourselves beneath a huge battlement of crags, rising precipitously from the river to the height of several hundred feet. Seldom have I gazed upon a scene more eminently imposing than that of these hoary old cliffs, when the midsummer-sun, rushing upward from the eastern horizon, bathed their splintered pinnacles and spires and the rifted tree-tops in a flood of golden effulgence. The scene was not unworthy

Walter Scott's graphic description of the view from the Trosachs of Loch Katrine, in the "Lady of the Lake:"

> "The *eastern* waves of *rising* day
> Roll'd o'er the *stream* their level way;
> Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
> Was bathed in floods of living fire.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Their rocky summits, split and rent,
> Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
> Or seem'd fantastically set
> With cupola or minaret,
> Wild crests as pagod ever decked
> Or mosque of eastern architect."

All of these precipices, not less than those on the Ohio, betray palpable indication of having once been swept by the stream; and the fantastic excavations and cavernous fissures which their bold escarpments expose would indicate a current far more furious and headstrong than that, resistless though it be, which now rolls at their base. The idea receives confirmation from the circumstance that opposite extends the broad American Bottom, whose alluvial character is undisputed. This tract once

constituted our western border, whence the name.

The bluffs of Selma and Herculaneum are distinguished for their beauty and grandeur, not less than for the practical utility to which they have been made subservient. Both places are great depositories of lead from the mines of the interior, and all along their cliffs, for miles, upon every eligible point, are erected tall towers for the manufacture of shot. Their appearance in distant view is singularly picturesque, perched lightly upon the pinnacles of towering cliffs, beetling over the flood, which rushes along two hundred feet below. Some of these shot manufactories have been in operation for nearly thirty years.[68] Herculaneum has long been celebrated for those in her vicinity. The situation of the town is the mouth of Joachim Creek; and the singular gap at this point has been aptly compared to an enormous door, thrown open in the cliffs for the passage of its waters. A few miles west of this village is said to exist a great natural curiosity, in shape of a huge rock of limestone, some hundred feet in length, and about fifty feet high. This rock is completely honeycombed with perforations, and has the appearance of having been pierced by

[68] For location and date of settlement of Herculaneum, see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 212, note 122.On a perpendicular bluff, more than a hundred feet in height, in the vicinity of Herculaneum, J. Macklot erected (1809) what was probably the first shot-tower this side of the Atlantic. The next year one Austin built another tower at the same point. According to H. R. Schoolcraft in his *View of the Lead Mines of Missouri* (New York, 1819), pp. 138, 139, there were in 1817 three shot-towers near Herculaneum, producing in the eighteen months ending June 1 of that year, 668,350 pounds of shot. From the top of small wooden towers erected on the edge of the bluff, the melted lead was poured through holes in copper pans or sieves. – Ed.

the mytilus or some other marine insect.

A few miles above Herculaneum comes in the Platine Creek;[69] and here commence the "Cornice Rocks," a magnificent escarpment of castellated cliffs some two or three hundred feet in perpendicular altitude from the bed of the stream, and extending along the western bank a distance of eight or ten miles. Through the façade of these bluffs pours in the tribute of the Merrimac, a bright, sparkling, beautiful stream.[70] This river is so clear and limpid that it was long supposed to glide over sands of silver; but the idea has been abandoned, and given place to the certainty of an abundant store of lead, and iron, and salt upon its banks, while its source is shaded by extensive forests of the white pine, a material in this section of country almost, if not quite, as valuable.[71] Ancient works of various forms are also found upon

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[69] For the location of the Platine (usually spelled Plattin), see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 212, note 123. Lead mining has been carried on in this district, intermittently, since 1824. – Ed.

[70] See Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 212, note 123. – Ed.

[71] The following extract from the Journal of Charlevoix, one of the earliest historians of the West, with reference to the Mines upon the Merrimac, may prove not uninteresting. The work is a rare one."On the 17th (Oct., 1721), after sailing five leagues farther, I left, on my right, the river Marameg, where they are at present employed in searching for a silver mine. Perhaps your grace may not be displeased if I inform you what success may be expected from this undertaking. Here follows what I have been able to collect about this affair, from a person who is well acquainted with it, and who has resided for several years on the spot."In the year 1719, the Sieur de Lochon, being sent by the West India Company, in quality of founder, and having dug in a place which had been marked out to him, drew up a pretty large quantity of ore, a pound whereof, which took up four days in smelting, produced, as they

the banks of the Merrimac. There is an immense cemetery near the village of Fenton, containing thousands of graves of a pigmy size, the largest not exceeding four feet in length. This cemetery is now enclosed and cultivated, so that the graves are no longer visible; but, previous to this, it is said that headstones were to be

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say, two drachms of silver; but some have suspected him of putting in this quantity himself. A few months afterward he returned thither, and, without thinking any more of the silver, he extracted from two or three thousand weight of ore fourteen pounds of very bad lead, which stood him in fourteen hundred francs. Disgusted with a labour which was so unprofitable, he returned to France."The company, persuaded of the truth of the indications which had been given them, and that the incapacity of the founder had been the sole cause of their bad success, sent, in his room, a Spaniard called Antonio, who had been taken at the siege of Pensacola; had afterward been a galley-slave, and boasted much of his having wrought in a mine at Mexico. They gave him very considerable appointments, but he succeeded no better than had done the Sieur de Lochon. He was not discouraged himself, and others inclined to believe that he had failed from his not being versed in the construction of furnaces. He gave over the search after lead, and undertook to make silver; he dug down to the rock, which was found to be eight or ten feet in thickness; several pieces of it were blown up and put into a crucible, from whence it was given out that he extracted three or four drachms of silver; but many are still doubtful of the truth of this fact."About this time arrived a company of the King's miners, under the direction of one *La Renaudiere*, who, resolving to begin with the lead mines, was able to do nothing; because neither he himself nor any of his company were in the least acquainted with the construction of furnaces. Nothing can be more surprising than the facility with which the company at that time exposed themselves to great expenses, and the little precaution they took to be satisfied of the capacity of those they employed. La Renaudiere and his miners not being able to procure any lead, a private company undertook the mines of the Marameg, and Sieur Renault, one of the directors, superintended them with care. In the month of June last he found a bed of lead ore two feet in thickness, running to a great length over a chain of mountains, where he has now set his people to work. He flatters himself that there is silver below the lead. Everybody is not of his opinion, but will discover the truth." – Flagg.

seen bearing unintelligible hieroglyphical inscriptions.[72] Human remains, ancient pottery, arrow-heads, and stone axes are daily thrown up by the ploughshare, while the numerous mounds in the vicinity are literally composed of the same materials. Mammoth bones, such as those discovered on the Ohio and in the state of New-York, are said also to have been found at a salt-lick near this stream.

It was a bright morning, on the fifth day of an exceedingly long passage, that we found ourselves approaching St. Louis. At about noon we were gliding beneath the broad ensign floating from the flagstaff of Jefferson Barracks.[73] The sun was gloriously bright; the soft summer wind was rippling the waters, and the clear cerulean of the heavens was imaged in their depths. The site of the quadrangle of the barracks enclosing the parade is the broad summit of a noble bluff, swelling up from the water, while the outbuildings are scattered picturesquely along the interval beneath; the view from the steamer cannot but strike the traveller as one of much scenic beauty. Passing the venerable village of

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[72] Flagg's account agrees with a much longer treatment by Lewis C. Beck, in his *Gazetteer of the States of Illinois and Missouri* (Albany, 1823), with the exception that the latter says there were no inscriptions to be found on the gravestones. Beck himself makes extended quotations from the *Missouri Gazette*, November 6, 1818, and subsequent numbers. Though no doubt exaggerated, these accounts were probably based on facts, for a large number of prehistoric remains have been found in St. Louis County and preserved in the Peabody Museum at New Haven, Connecticut, and elsewhere. – Ed.

[73] For an account of Jefferson Barracks, see Townsend's *Narrative*, in our volume xxi, p. 122, note 2. – Ed.

Carondelet, with its whitewashed cottages crumbling with years, and old Cahokia buried in the forests on the opposite bank, the gray walls of the Arsenal next stood out before us in the rear of its beautiful esplanade.[74] A fine quay is erected upon the river in front, and the extensive grounds are enclosed by a wall of stone. Sweeping onward, the lofty spire and dusky walls of St. Louis Cathedral, on rounding a river bend, opened upon the eye, the gilded crucifix gleaming in the sunlight from its lofty summit; and then the glittering cupolas and church domes, and the fresh aspect of private residences, mingling with the bright foliage of forest-trees interspersed, all swelling gently from the water's edge, recalled vividly the beautiful "Mistress of the North," as my eye has often lingered upon her from her magnificent bay. A few more spires, and the illusion would be perfect. For beauty of outline in distant view, St. Louis is deservedly famed. The extended range of limestone warehouses circling the shore give to the city a grandeur of aspect, as approached from the water, not often beheld; while the dense-rolling forest-tops stretching away in the rear, the sharp outline of the towers and roofs against the western sky, and the funereal grove of steamboat-pipes lining

[74] For the history of Carondelet, see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 215, note 124.For reference to Cahokia, see A. Michaux's *Travels*, in our volume iii, p. 70, note 135.On May 20, 1826, Congress made an appropriation of fifteen thousand dollars to the secretary of war, for the purpose of purchasing the site for the erection of an arsenal in the vicinity of St. Louis. Lands now far within the southeastern limits of the city were purchased, and the buildings erected which were used for arsenals until January 16, 1871, when they were occupied as a depot for the general mounted recruiting service. – Ed.

the quay, altogether make up a combination of features novel and picturesque. As we approached the landing all the uproar and confusion of a steamboat port was before us, and our own arrival added to the bustle.

And now, perchance, having escaped the manifold perils of sawyer and snag, planter, wreck-heap, and sand-bar, it may not be unbecoming in me, like an hundred other tourists, to gather up a votive offering, and – if classic allusion be permissible on the waters of the wilderness West – hang it up before the shrine of the "Father of Floods."

It is surely no misnomer that this giant stream has been styled the "eternal river," the "terrible Mississippi;"[75] for we may find none other imbodying so many elements of the fearful and the sublime. In the wild rice-lakes of the far frozen north, amid a solitude broken only by the shrill clang of the myriad water-fowls, is its home. Gushing out from its fountains clear as the air-bell, it sparkles over the white pebbly sand-beds, and, breaking over the beautiful falls of the "Laughing Water,"[76] it takes up its majestic march to the distant deep. Rolling onward through the shades of magnificent forests, and hoary, castellated cliffs, and beautiful meadows, its volume is swollen as it advances, until it receives to its bosom a tributary, a rival, a conqueror, which has roamed three thousand miles for the meeting, and its original features are lost for ever. Its beauty is merged in sublimity!

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[75] A name of Algonquin origin —*Missi* signifying great, and *sepe* a river. – Flagg.

[76] Indian name for the "Falls of St. Anthony." – Flagg.

Pouring along in its deep bed the heaped-up waters of streams which drain the broadest valley on the globe; sweeping onward in a boiling mass, furious, turbid, always dangerous; tearing away, from time to time, its deep banks, with their giant colonnades of living verdure, and then, with the stern despotism of a conqueror, flinging them aside again; governed by no principle but its own lawless will, the dark majesty of its features summons up an emotion of the sublime which defies contrast or parallel. And then, when we think of its far, lonely course, journeying onward in proud, dread, solitary grandeur, through forests dusk with the lapse of centuries, pouring out the ice and snows of arctic lands through every temperature of clime, till at last it heaves free its mighty bosom beneath the Line, we are forced to yield up ourselves in uncontrolled admiration of its gloomy magnificence. And its dark, mysterious history, too; those fearful scenes of which it has alone been the witness; the venerable tombs of a race departed which shadow its waters; the savage tribes that yet roam its forests; the germes of civilization expanding upon its borders; and the deep solitudes, untrodden by man, through which it rolls, all conspire to throng the fancy. Ages on ages and cycles upon cycles have rolled away; wave after wave has swept the broad fields of the Old World; an hundred generations have arisen from the cradle and flourished in their freshness, and, like autumn leaflets, have withered in the tomb; and the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies, the Cæsars and the Caliphs, have thundered over the nations and passed away; and here, amid these terrible

solitudes, in the stern majesty of loneliness, and power, and pride, have rolled onward these deep waters to their destiny!

> "Who gave you your invulnerable life,
> Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy?
> God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
> Answer!"

There is, perhaps, no stream which presents a greater variety of feature than the Mississippi, or phenomena of deeper interest, whether we regard the soil, productions, and climate of its valley, its individual character and that of its tributaries, or the outline of its scenery and course. The confluents of this vast stream are numerous, and each one brings a tribute of the soil through which it has roamed. The Missouri pours out its waters heavily charged with the marl of the Rocky Mountains, the saffron sands of the Yellow Stone, and the chalk of the White River; the Ohio holds in its floods the vegetable mould of the Alleghanies, and the Arkansas and Red Rivers bring in the deep-died alluvion of their banks. Each tributary mingles the spoils of its native hills with the general flood. And yet, after the contributions of so many streams, the remarkable fact is observed that its breadth and volume seem rather diminished than increased.[77] Above the

[77] That the Mississippi, the Missouri, and, indeed, most of the great rivers of the West, are annually enlarging, as progress is made in clearing and cultivating the regions drained by them, scarcely admits a doubt. Within the past thirty years, the width of the Mississippi has sensibly increased; its overflows are more frequent, while, by the

embouchure of the Missouri, fifteen hundred miles from the Mexican gulf, it is broader than at New-Orleans, with scarce one tenth of its waters; and at the foot of St. Anthony's Falls its breadth is but one third less. This forms a striking characteristic of the Western rivers, and owes, perhaps, its origin partially to the turbid character of their waters: as they approach their outlet they augment in volume, and depth, and impetuosity of current, but contract their expanse. None, however, exhibit these features so strikingly as the grand central stream; and while, for its body of water, it is the narrowest stream known, it is charged with heavier solutions and has broader alluvions than any other. The depth of the stream is constantly varying. At New-Orleans it exceeds one hundred feet. Its width is from half of one mile to two miles; the breadth of its valley from six miles to sixty; the rapidity of its current from two miles to four; its mean descent six inches in a mile, and its annual floods vary from twelve feet to sixty, commencing in March and ending in May. Thus much for Statistics.

Below its confluence with its turbid tributary, the Mississippi,

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diminution of obstructions, it would seem not to have become proportionally shallow. In 1750, the French settlements began upon the river above New-Orleans, and for twenty years the banks were cultivated without a *levee*. Inundation was then a rare occurrence: ever since, from year to year, the river has continued to rise, and require higher and stronger embankments. A century hence, if this phenomenon continues, what a magnificent spectacle will not this river present! How terrific its freshets! The immense forest of timber which lies concealed beneath its depths, as evinced by the great earthquakes of 1811, demonstrates that, for centuries, the Mississippi has occupied its present bed. – Flagg.

as has been observed, is no longer the clear, pure, limpid stream, gushing forth from the wreathy snows of the Northwest; but it whirls along against its ragged banks a resistless volume of heavy, sweeping floods, and its aspect of placid magnificence is beheld no more. The turbid torrent heaves onward, wavering from side to side like a living creature, as if to overleap its bounds; rolling along in a deep-cut race-path, through a vast expanse of lowland meadow, from whose exhaustless mould are reared aloft those enormous shafts shrouded in the fresh emerald of their tasselled parasites, for which its alluvial bottoms are so famous. And yet the valley of the "endless river" cannot be deemed heavily timbered when contrasted with the forested hills of the Ohio. The sycamore, the elm, the linden, the cotton-wood, the cypress, and other trees of deciduous foliage, may attain a greater diameter, but the huge trunks are more sparse and more isolated in recurrence.

But one of the most striking phenomena of the Mississippi, in common with all the Western rivers, and one which distinguishes them from those which disembogue their waters into the Atlantic, is the uniformity of its meanderings. The river, in its onward course, makes a semicircular sweep almost with the precision of a compass, and then is precipitated diagonally athwart its channel to a curve of equal regularity upon the opposite shore. The deepest channel and most rapid current is said to exist in the bend; and thus the stream generally infringes upon the *bend-side*, and throws up a sandbar on the shore

opposite. So constantly do these sinuosities recur, that there are said to be but three *reaches* of any extent between the confluence of the Ohio and the Gulf, and so uniform that the boatmen and Indians have been accustomed to estimate their progress by the number of bends rather than by the number of miles. One of the sweeps of the Missouri is said to include a distance of forty miles in its curve, and a circuit of half that distance is not uncommon. Sometimes a "*cut-off*," in the parlance of the watermen, is produced at these bends, where the stream, in its headlong course, has burst through the narrow neck of the peninsula, around which it once circled. At a point called the "Grand Cut-off," steamers now pass through an isthmus of less than one mile, where formerly was required a circuit of twenty. The current, in its more furious stages, often tears up islands from the bed of the river, removes sandbars and points, and sweeps off whole acres of alluvion with their superincumbent forests. In the season of flood the settlers, in their log-cabins along the banks, are often startled from their sleep by the deep, sullen crash of a "land-slip," as such removals are called.

The scenery of the Mississippi, below its confluence with the Missouri, is, as has been remarked, too sublime for beauty; and yet there is not a little of the picturesque in the views which meet the eye along the banks. Towns and settlements of greater or less extent appear at frequent intervals; and then the lowly log-hut of the pioneer is not to be passed without notice, standing beneath the tall, branchless columns of the girdled forest-trees,

with its luxuriant maize-fields sweeping away in the rear. One of these humble habitations of the wilderness we reached, I remember, one evening near twilight; and while our boat was delayed at the woodyard, I strolled up from the shore to the gateway, and entered easily into confabulation with a pretty, slatternly-looking female, with a brood of mushroom, flaxen-haired urchins at her apron-string, and an infant at the breast very quietly receiving his supper. On inquiry I learned that eighteen years had seen the good woman a denizen of the wilderness; that all the responsibilities appertained unto herself, and that her "man" was proprietor of some thousand acres of *bottom* in the vicinity. Subsequently I was informed that the worthy woodcutter could be valued at not less than one hundred thousand! yet, *en verite*, reader mine, I do asseverate that my latent sympathies were not slightly roused at the first introduction, because of the seeming poverty of the dirty cabin and its dirtier mistress!

St. Louis.

VIII

"Once more upon the waters, yet once more!"

Childe Harold.

"I believe this is the finest confluence in the world."

Charlevoix.

"'Tis twilight now;
The sovereign sun behind his western hills
In glory hath declined."

Blackwood's Magazine.

A bright, sunny summer morning as ever smiled from the blue heavens, and again I found myself upon the waters. Fast fading in the distance lay the venerable little city of the French, with its ancient edifices and its narrow streets, while in anticipation was a journeying of some hundred miles up the Illinois. Sweeping along past the city and the extended line of steamers at the landing, my attention was arrested by that series of substantial stone mills situated upon the shore immediately above, and a group of swarthy little Tritons disporting themselves in the turbid waters almost beneath our paddle-wheels. Among other

singular objects were divers of those nondescript inventions of Captain Shreve, yclept by the boatmen "Uncle Sam's Tooth-pullers;" and, judging from their ferocious physiognomy, and the miracles they have effected in the navigation of the great waters of the West, well do they correspond to the *soubriquet*. The craft consists of two perfect hulls, constructed with a view to great strength; united by heavy beams, and, in those parts most exposed, protected by an armature of iron. The apparatus for eradicating the snags is comprised in a simple wheel and axle, auxiliary to a pair of powerful steam-engines, with the requisite machinery for locomotion, and a massive beam uniting the bows of the hulls, sheathed with iron. The *modus operandi* in tearing up a snag, or sawyer, or any like obstruction from the bed of the stream, appears to be this: Commencing at some distance below, in order to gain an impetus as powerful as possible, the boat is forced, under a full pressure of steam, against the snag, the head of which, rearing itself above the water, meets the strong transverse beam of which I have spoken, and is immediately elevated a number of feet above the surface. A portion of the log is then severed, and the roots are torn out by the windlass, or application of the main strength of the engines; or, if practicable, the first operation is repeated until the obstacle is completely eradicated. The efficiency of this instrument has been tested by the removal of some thousand obstructions, at an average expense of about twelve or fifteen dollars each.

Along the river-banks in the northern suburbs of the city lie

the scattered ruins of an ancient fortification of the Spanish government, when it held domination over the territory; and one circular structure of stone, called "Roy's Tower," now occupied as a dwelling, yet remains entire. There is also an old castle of stone in tolerable preservation, surrounded by a wall of the same material.[78] Some of these venerable relics of former time – alas! for the irreverence of the age – have been converted into limekilns, and into lime itself, for aught that is known to the contrary! The waterworks, General Ashley's beautiful residence, and that series of ancient mounds for which St. Louis is famous, were next passed in succession, while upon the right stretched out the long low outline of "Blood Island" in the middle of the stream.[79] For several miles above the city, as we proceeded up

[78] In 1764 Auguste Chouteau made tentative plans for the fortification of St. Louis. In obedience to an order by Don Francisco Cruzat, the lieutenant-governor, he made a survey in 1781 for the purpose of perfecting these earlier plans. In the same year the stockade was begun immediately south of the present site of the courthouse. In 1797 the round stone tower which Flagg mentions was constructed and preparations made for building four additional towers; the latter were never completed. From 1804 to 1806 these fortifications were used by the United States troops, and then abandoned for military purposes. The commandant's house served as a courthouse from 1806 to 1816; and the tower as a jail until 1819. For a detailed description of the plans, see J. F. Scharf, *St. Louis City and County* (Philadelphia, 1883), p. 136 ff. – Ed.

[79] For a brief sketch of William H. Ashley see Maximilian's *Travels*, in our volume xxii, p. 250, note 198. He purchased (1826 or 1827) eight acres on the present site of Broadway, between Biddle and Bates streets, St. Louis, where he built a handsome residence.Bloody Island, now the Third Ward of East St. Louis, was formed about 1800 by the current cutting its way through the neck in a bend of the river. For a long time it was not determined to what state it belonged, and being considered neutral ground many duels were fought there, notably those between Thomas H. Benton and

the river, pleasant villas, with their white walls and cultivated grounds, were caught from time to time by the eye, glancing through the green foliage far in the interior. It was a glorious day. Silvery cloudlets were floating along the upper sky like spiritual creations, and a fresh breeze was rippling the waters: along the banks stood out the huge spectral Titans of the forest, heaving aloft their naked limbs like monuments of "time departed," while beneath reposed the humble hut and clearing of the settler.

It was nearly midday, after leaving St. Louis, that we reached the embouchure of the Missouri. Twenty miles before attaining that point, the confluent streams flow along in two distinct currents upon either shore, the one white, clayey, and troubled, the other a deep blue. The river sweeps along, indeed, in two distinct streams past the city of St. Louis, upon either side of Blood Island, nor does it unite its heterogeneous floods for many miles below. At intervals, as the huge mass rolls itself along, vast whirls and swells of turbid water burst out upon the surface, producing an aspect not unlike the sea in a gusty day, mottled by the shadows of scudding clouds. Charlevoix,[80] the chronicler of the early French explorations in North America, with reference to this giant confluence, more than a century since thus writes: "I believe this is the finest confluence in the world. The two

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Charles Lucas (1817), United States District Attorney Thomas Rector and Joshua Barton (1823), and Thomas Biddle and Spencer Pettis (1830). The name was derived from these bloody associations. – Ed.

[80] For a sketch of Charlevoix, see Nuttall's *Journal*, in our volume xiii, p. 116, note 81. – Ed.

rivers are much of the same breadth, each about half a league, but the Missouri is by far the most rapid, and seems to enter the Mississippi like a conqueror, through which it carries its white waves to the opposite shore without mixing them. Afterward it gives its colour to the Mississippi, which it never loses again, but carries quite down to the sea." This account, with all due consideration for the venerable historian, accords not precisely with the scene of the confluence at the present day, at least not as it has appeared to myself. The Missouri, indeed, rolls in its heavy volume with the impetuosity and bearing of a "conqueror" upon the tranquil surface of its rival; but entering, as it does, at right angles, its waters are met in their headlong course, and almost rolled back upon themselves for an instant by the mighty momentum of the flood they strike. This is manifested by, and accounts for, that well-defined line of light mud-colour extending from bank to bank across its mouth, bounded by the dark blue of the Upper Mississippi, and flowing sluggishly along in a lengthened and dingy stain, like a fringe upon the western shore. The breadth of the embouchure is about one mile, and its channel lies nearly in the centre, bounded by vast sand-bars – sediment of the waters – upon either side. The alluvial deposites, with which it is heavily charged, accumulate also in several islands near the confluence, while the rivers united spread themselves out into an immense lake. As the steamer glides along among these islands opposite the Missouri, the scene with its associations is grand beyond description. Far up the extended vista of the stream, upon

a lofty bluff, stands out a structure which marks the site of the ancient military post of "Belle Fontaine;"[81] while on the opposite bank, stretching inland from the point heavily wooded, lies the broad and beautiful prairie of the "Mamelles."[82] Directly fronting the confluence stand a range of heights upon the Illinois shore, from the summit of which is spread out, like a painting, one of the most extraordinary views in the world.

The Mississippi, above its junction with its turbid tributary, is, as has been remarked, a clear, sparkling, beautiful stream; now flashing in silvery brilliance over its white sand-bars, then retreating far into the deep indentations of its shady banks, and again spreading out its waters into a tranquil, lakelike basin miles in extent, studded with islets.

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[81] D'Ulloa, the first Spanish governor of Louisiana, sent a detachment of soldiers to St. Louis in 1767. Later, these troops were transferred to the south bank of the Missouri, a few miles above its mouth, where "Old Fort St. Charles the Prince" was erected. General Wilkinson built Fort Bellefontaine on this site in 1805. From 1809 to 1815 this was the headquarters of the military department of Louisiana (including Forts Madison, Massac, Osage, and Vincennes). It was the starting point of the Pike, Long, and Atkinson expeditions. On July 10, 1826, it was abandoned for Jefferson Barracks, but a small arsenal of deposits was maintained here until 1834. The land was eventually sold by the government (1836). See Walter B. Douglas's note in Thwaites, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York, 1905), v, pp. 392, 393. – Ed.

[82] North of Missouri River, twenty miles above its confluence with the Mississippi, where the bluffs of the two streams unite, two smooth, treeless, grass-covered mounds stand out from the main bluffs. These mounds, a hundred and fifty feet in height, were called by the early French "mamelles" from their fancied resemblance to the human breast. – Ed.

The far-famed village of Alton, situated upon the Illinois shore a few miles above the confluence, soon rose before us in the distance. When its multiform declivities shall have been smoothed away by the hand of enterprise and covered with handsome edifices, it will doubtless present a fine appearance from the water; as it now remains, its aspect is rugged enough. The Penitentiary, a huge structure of stone, is rather too prominent a feature in the scene. Indeed, it is the first object which strikes the attention, and reminds one of a gray old baronial castle of feudal days more than of anything else. The churches, of which there are several, and the extensive warehouses along the shore, have an imposing aspect, and offer more agreeable associations. As we drew nigh to Alton, the fireman of our steamer deemed proper, in testimonial of the dignity of our arrival, to let off a certain rusty old swivel which chanced to be on board; and to have witnessed the marvellous fashion in which this important manœuvre was executed by our worthies, would have pardoned a smile on the visage of Heraclitus himself. One lanky-limbed genius held a huge dipper of gunpowder; another, seizing upon the extremity of a hawser, and severing a generous fragment, made use thereof for wadding; a third rammed home the charge with that fearful weapon wherewith he poked the furnaces; while a fourth, honest wight – all preparation being complete – advanced with a shovel of glowing coals, which, poured upon the touchhole, the old piece was briefly delivered of its charge, and the woods, and shores,

and welkin rang again to the roar. If we made not our entrance into Alton with "pomp and circumstance," it was surely the fault of any one but our worthy fireman.

The site of Alton, at the confluence of three large and navigable streams; its extensive back country of great fertility; the vast bodies of heavy timber on every side; its noble quarries of stone; its inexhaustible beds of bituminous coal only one mile distant, and its commodious landing, all seem to indicate the design of Nature that here should arise a populous and wealthy town. The place has been laid off by its proprietors in liberal style; five squares have been reserved for public purposes, with a promenade and landing, and the corporate bounds extend two miles along the river, and half a mile into the interior. Yet Alton, with all its local and artificial advantages, is obnoxious to objections. Its situation, in one section abrupt and precipitous, while in another depressed and confined, and the extensive alluvion lying between the two great rivers opposite, it is believed, will always render it more or less unhealthy; and its unenviable proximity to St. Louis will never cease to retard its commercial advancement.

The *city* of Alton, as it is now styled by its charter, was founded in the year 1818 by a gentleman who gave the place his name;[83] but, until within the six years past, it could boast

[83] Alton, twenty-five miles above St. Louis, is the principal city of Madison County, Illinois. In 1807 the French erected here a small trading post. Rufus Easton laid out the town (1818), and named it for his son. The state penitentiary was first built at Alton (1827), but the last prisoner was transferred (1860) to the new penitentiary at Joliet,

but few houses and little business. Its population now amounts to several thousands, and its edifices for business, private residence, or public convenience are large and elegant structures. Its stone churches present an imposing aspect to the visiter. The streets are from forty to eighty feet in width, and extensive operations are in progress to render the place as uniform as its site will admit. A contract has been recently entered upon to construct a culvert over the Little Piasa Creek, which passes through the centre of the town, upon which are to be extended streets. The expense is estimated at sixty thousand dollars. The creek issues from a celebrated fountain among the bluffs called "Cave Spring." Alton is not a little celebrated for its liberal contribution to the moral improvements of the day. To mention but a solitary instance, a gentleman of the place recently made a donation of ten thousand dollars for the endowment of a female seminary at Monticello,[84] a village five miles to the north; and measures are in progress to carry the design into immediate execution. Two railroads are shortly to be constructed from Alton; one to Springfield, seventy miles distant, and the other to Mount Carmel on the Wabash. The stock of each has been mostly subscribed, and they cannot fail, when completed, to add much to the importance of the places.

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begun in 1857. Alton was the scene of the famous anti-Abolitionist riot of November 7, 1837, when Elijah P. Lovejoy was killed. – Ed.

[84] Captain Benjamin Godfrey donated fifteen acres of land and thirty-five thousand dollars for the erection of a female seminary at Godfrey, Madison County, Illinois. The school was opened April 11, 1838, under the title of the Monticello Female Seminary, with Rev. Theron Baldwin for its first principal. – Ed.

Alton is also a *proposed* terminus of two of the state railroads, and of the Cumberland Road.[85]

At Alton terminates the "American Bottom," and here commences that singular series of green, grassy mounds, rounding off the steep summits of the cliffs as they rise from the water, which every traveller cannot but have noticed and admired. It was a calm, beautiful evening when we left the village; and, gliding beneath the magnificent bluffs, held our way up the stream, breaking in upon its tranquil surface, and rolling its waters upon either side in tumultuous waves to the shore. The rich purple of departing day was dying the western heavens; the light gauzy haze of twilight was unfolding itself like a veil over the forest-tops; "Maro's shepherd star" was stealing timidly forth upon the brow of night; the flashing fireflies along the underbrush were beginning their splendid illuminations, and the mild melody of a flute and a few fine voices floating over the shadowy waters, lent the last touching to a scene of beauty. A little French village, with its broad galleries, and steep roofs, and venerable church, in a few miles appeared among the underbrush

[85] The plans mentioned here were probably being agitated when Flagg visited Alton in 1836. The act incorporating the first railroad in Illinois was approved January 17, 1835; it provided for the construction of a road from Chicago to a point opposite Vincennes. By the internal improvement act of February 27, 1837, a road was authorized to be constructed from Alton to Terre Haute, by way of Shelbyville, and another from Alton to Mount Carmel, by way of Salem, Marion County; but the act was repealed before the roads were completed. The Cumberland road was constructed only to Vandalia, Fayette County, though the internal improvement act contemplated its extension to St. Louis. – Ed.

on the left.[86] Upon the opposite shore the bluffs began to assume a singular aspect, as if the solid mass of limestone high up had been subjected to the excavation of rushing waters. The cliffs elevated themselves from the river's edge like a regular succession of enormous pillars, rendered more striking by their ashy hue. This giant colonnade – in some places exceeding an altitude of an hundred feet, and exhibiting in its façade the openings of several caves – extended along the stream until we reached Grafton,[87] at the mouth of the Illinois; the calm, beautiful, ever-placid Illinois; beautiful now as on the day the enthusiast voyageur first deemed it the pathway to a "paradise upon earth." The moon was up, and her beams were resting mellowly upon the landscape. Far away, even to the blue horizon, the mirror-surface of the stream unfolded its vistas to the eye; upon its bosom slumbered the bright islets, like spirits of the waters, from whose clear depths stood out the reflection of their forests, while to the left opened upon the view a glimpse of the "Mamelle Prairie," rolling its bright waves of verdure beneath the moonlight like a field of fairy land. For an hour we gazed upon

[86] The French village is no doubt Portage des Sioux. In 1799 Francis Leseuer, a resident of St. Charles, visited the place, which was then an Indian settlement. Pleased with the location he returned to St. Charles, and secured a grant of the land from Don Carlos Dehault Delassus, lieutenant-governor of Upper Louisiana, organized a colony from among the French inhabitants of St. Charles and St. Louis, and occupied the place the same autumn. – Ed.

[87] Grafton, Jersey County, Illinois, was settled in 1832 by James Mason, and named by him in honor of his native place. It was laid out (1836) by Paris and Sarah Mason. – Ed.

this magnificent scene, and the bright waves dashed in sparkles from our bow, retreating in lengthened wake behind us, until our steamer turned from the Mississippi, and we were gliding along beneath the deep shadows of the forested Illinois.

Illinois River.

IX

"A tale of the times of old! The deeds of days of other years!"

Ossian.

"Thou beautiful river! Thy bosom is calm
And o'er thee soft breezes are shedding their balm;
And Nature beholds her fair features portray'd,
In the glass of thy bosom serenely display'd."

Bengal Annual.

"Tam saw an unco sight."

Burns.

It is an idea which has more than once occurred to me, while throwing together these hasty delineations of the beautiful scenes through which, for the past few weeks, I have been moving, that, by some, a disposition might be suspected to tinge every outline indiscriminately with the "*coleur de rose*." But as well might one talk of an exaggerated emotion of the sublime on the table-rock of Niagara, or amid the "snowy scalps" of Alpine scenery, or of a mawkish sensibility to loveliness amid the purple glories of the "*Campagna di Roma*," as of either, or of both

combined, in the noble "valley beyond the mountains." Nor is the interest experienced by the traveller for many of the spots he passes confined to their scenic beauty. The associations of by-gone times are rife in the mind, and the traditionary legend of the events these scenes have witnessed yet lingers among the simple forest-sons. I have mentioned that remarkable range of cliffs commencing at Alton, and extending, with but little interruption, along the left shore of the Mississippi to the mouth of the Illinois. Through a deep, narrow ravine in these bluffs flows a small stream called the Piasa. The name is of aboriginal derivation, and, in the idiom of the Illini, denotes "*The bird that devours men*." Near the mouth of this little stream rises a bold, precipitous bluff, and upon its smooth face, at an elevation seemingly unattainable by human art, is graven the figure of an enormous bird with extended pinions. This bird was by the Indians called the "*Piasa*;" hence the name of the stream. The tradition of the Piasa is said to be still extant, among the tribes of the Upper Mississippi, and is thus related:[88]

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[88] The Illinois Indians (from "Illini," meaning "men") were of Algonquian stock, and formerly occupied the state to which they gave the name. They were loyal to the French during their early wars, later aided the English, and were with great difficulty subdued by the United States government. Separate tribes of the Illinois Indians were the Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Michigami, Moingewena, Peoria, and Tamaroa.On a high bluff just above Alton there was formerly to be seen a huge painted image known among the Indians as the Piasa Bird. To the natives it was an object of much veneration, and in time many superstitions became connected therewith. First described in the *Journal* of Father Jacques Marquette (1673) its origin was long a subject of speculation among early writers. Traces of this strange painting could be seen until 1840 or 1845,

"Many thousand moons before the arrival of the pale faces, when the great megalonyx and mastodon, whose bones are now thrown up, were still living in the land of the green prairies, there existed a bird of such dimensions that he could easily carry off in his talons a full-grown deer. Having obtained a taste of human flesh, from that time he would prey upon nothing else. He was as artful as he was powerful; would dart suddenly and unexpectedly upon an Indian, bear him off to one of the caves in the bluff, and devour him. Hundreds of warriors attempted for years to destroy him, but without success. Whole villages were depopulated, and consternation spread throughout all the tribes of the Illini. At length *Owatoga*, a chief whose fame as a warrior extended even beyond the great lakes, separating himself from the rest of his tribe, fasted in solitude for the space of a whole moon, and prayed to the Great Spirit, the Master of Life, that he would protect his children from the *Piasa*. On the last night of his fast the Great Spirit appeared to him in a dream, and directed him to select twenty of his warriors, each armed with a bow and pointed arrows, and conceal them in a designated spot. Near the place of their concealment another warrior was to stand

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when they were entirely obliterated through quarrying. See P. A. Armstrong, *The Piasa or the Devil among the Indians* (Morris, Illinois, 1887).The version of the tradition given by Flagg was probably from the pen of John Russell, who in 1837 began editing at Grafton, Illinois, the *Backwoodsman*, a local newspaper. Russell had in 1819 or 1820 published in the *Missourian* an article entitled "Venomous Worm," which won for him considerable reputation. Russell admitted that the version was largely imaginative; nevertheless it had a wide circulation. – Ed.

in open view as a victim for the *Piasa*, which they must shoot the instant he pounced upon his prey. When the chief awoke in the morning he thanked the Great Spirit, returned to his tribe, and told them his dream. The warriors were quickly selected and placed in ambush. *Owatoga* offered himself as the victim, willing to die for his tribe; and, placing himself in open view of the bluff, he soon saw the *Piasa* perched on the cliff, eying his prey. *Owatoga* drew up his manly form to its utmost height; and, placing his feet firmly upon the earth, began to chant the death-song of a warrior: a moment after, the *Piasa* rose in the air, and, swift as a thunderbolt, darted down upon the chief. Scarcely had he reached his victim when every bow was sprung and every arrow was sped to the feather into his body. The *Piasa* uttered a wild, fearful scream, that resounded far over the opposite side of the river, and expired. *Owatoga* was safe. Not an arrow, not even the talons of the bird had touched him; for the Master of Life, in admiration of his noble deed, had held over him an invisible shield. In memory of this event, this image of the Piasa was engraved in the face of the bluff."

Such is the Indian tradition. True or false, the figure of the bird, with expanded wings, graven upon the surface of solid rock, is still to be seen at a height perfectly inaccessible; and to this day no Indian glides beneath the spot in his canoe without discharging at this figure his gun. Connected with this tradition, as the spot to which the Piasa conveyed his human victims, is one of those caves to which I have alluded. Another, near the mouth of the

Illinois, situated about fifty feet from the water, and exceedingly difficult of access, is said to be crowded with human remains to the depth of many feet in the earth of the floor. The roof of the cavern is vaulted. It is about twenty-five feet in height, thirty in length, and in form is very irregular. There are several other cavernous fissures among these cliffs not unworthy description.

The morning's dawn found our steamer gliding quietly along upon the bright waters of the Illinois. The surface of the stream was tranquil; not a ripple disturbed its slumbers; it was currentless; the mighty mass of the Mississippi was swollen, and, acting as a dam across the mouth of its tributary, caused a *back-water* of an hundred miles. The waters of the Illinois were consequently stagnant, tepid, and by no means agreeable to the taste. There was present, also, a peculiarly bitter twang, thought to be imparted by the roots of the trees and plants along its banks, which, when motionless, its waters steep; under these circumstances, water is always provided from the Mississippi before entering the mouth of the Illinois. But, whatever its qualities, this stream, to the eye, is one of the most beautiful that meanders the earth. As we glided onward upon its calm bosom, a graceful little fawn, standing upon the margin in the morning sunlight, was bending her large, lustrous eyes upon the delicate reflection of her form, mirrored in the stream; and, like the fabled Narcissus, so enamoured did she appear with the charm of her own loveliness, that our noisy approach seemed scarce to startle her; or perchance she was the pet of some neighbouring

log-cabin. The Illinois is by many considered the "*belle rivière*" of the Western waters, and, in a commercial and agricultural view, is destined, doubtless, to occupy an important rank. Tonti, the old French chronicler, speaks thus of it:[89] "The banks of that river are as charming to the eye as useful to life; the meadows, fruit-trees, and forests affording everything that is necessary for men and beasts." It traverses the entire length of one of the most fertile regions in the Union, and irrigates, by its tributary streams, half the breadth. Its channel is sufficiently deep for steamers of the larger class; its current is uniform, and the obstacles to its navigation are few, and may be easily removed. The chief of these is a narrow bar just below the town of Beardstown,[90] stretching like a wing-dam quite across to the western bank; and any boat which may pass this bar can at all times reach the port of the Rapids. Its length is about three hundred miles, and its narrowest part, opposite Peru, is about eighty yards in width. By means of a canal, uniting its waters with those of Lake Michigan, the internal navigation of the whole country from New-York to New-Orleans is designed to be completed.[91]

The banks of the Illinois are depressed and monotonous,

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[89] For a sketch of Tonty, see Nuttall's *Journal*, in our volume xiii, p. 117, note 85. – Ed.

[90] Beardstone, Cass County, Illinois, was laid out by Thomas Beard and Enoch Marsh (1827). During the Black Hawk War (1832), it was the principal supply base for the Illinois volunteers. – Ed.

[91] For an account of the Illinois Canal, see Flint's *Letters*, in our volume ix, p. 186, note 93. – Ed.

liable at all seasons to inundation, and stretch away for miles to the bluffs in broad prairies, glimpses of whose lively emerald and silvery lakes, caught at intervals through the dark fringe of cypress skirting the stream, are very refreshing. The bottom lands upon either side, from one mile to five, are seldom elevated much above the ordinary surface of the stream, and are at every higher stage of water submerged to the depth of many feet, presenting the appearance of a stream rolling its tide through an ancient and gloomy forest, luxuriant in foliage and vast in extent. It is not surprising that all these regions should be subject to the visitations of disease, when we look upon the miserable cabin of the woodcutter, reared upon the very verge of the water, surrounded on every side by swamps, and enveloped in their damp dews and the poisonous exhalations rising from the seething decomposition of the monstrous vegetation around. The traveller wonders not at the sallow complexion, the withered features, and the fleshless, ague-racked limbs, which, as he passes, peep forth upon him from the luxuriant foliage of this region of sepulchres; his only astonishment is, that in such an atmosphere the human constitution can maintain vitality at all. And yet, never did the poet's dream image scenery more enchanting than is sometimes unfolded upon this beautiful stream. I loved, on a bright sunny morning, to linger hours away upon the lofty deck, as our steamer thridded the green islets of the winding waters, and gaze upon the reflection of the blue sky flecked with cloudlets in the bluer wave beneath, and

watch the startling splash of the glittering fish, as, in exhilarated joyousness, he flung himself from its tranquil bosom, and then fell back again into its cool depths. Along the shore strode the bluebacked wader; the wild buck bounded to his thicket; the graceful buzzard – vulture of the West – soared majestically over the tree-tops, while the fitful chant of the fireman at his toil echoed and re-echoed through the recesses of the forests.

Upon the left, in ascending the Illinois, lie the lands called the "*Military Bounty Tract*," reserved by Congress for distribution among the soldiers of the late war with Great Britain.[92] It is comprehended within the peninsula of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers, about an hundred and seventy miles in length and sixty broad, embracing twelve of the northwest counties of the state. This tract of country is said to be exceedingly fertile, abounding in beautiful prairies and lakes; but the delta or alluvial regions cannot but prove unhealthy. Its disposition for the purpose of military bounties has retarded its settlement behind that of any other quarter of the state; a very inconsiderable portion has been appropriated by the soldiers; most of the titles

[92] By act of Congress approved May 6, 1812, three tracts of land, not exceeding on the whole six million acres, were authorized to be surveyed and used as a bounty for the soldiers engaged in the war begun with Great Britain in that year. The tract surveyed in Illinois Territory comprehended the land lying between the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, extending seven miles north of Quincy, on the former stream, and to the present village of De Pue, in southeastern Bureau County, on the latter; it embraced the present counties of Calhoun, Pike, Adams, Brown, Schuyler, Hancock, McDonough, Fulton, Peoria, Stark, Knox, Warren, Henderson, and Mercer, and parts of Henry, Bureau, Putnam, and Marshall. – Ed.

have long since departed, and the land has been disposed of past redemption for taxes. Much is also held by non-residents, who estimate it at an exorbitant value; but large tracts can be obtained for a trifling consideration, the purchaser risking the title, and many flourishing settlements are now springing up, especially along the Mississippi.

Near the southern extremity of the Military Tract, at a point where the river sweeps out a deep bend from its western bank, about fifty years since was situated the little French village of *Cape au Gris*, or Grindstone Point, so named from the neighbouring rocks. The French seem to have vied with the natives in rendering the "signification" conformable to the "thing signified," in bestowing names upon their explorations in the West. The village of *Cape au Gris* was situated upon the bank of the river, and, so late as 1811, consisted of twenty or thirty families, who cultivated a "common field" of five hundred acres on the adjacent prairie, stretching across the peninsula towards the Mississippi. At the commencement of the late war they were driven away by the savages, and a small garrison from the cantonment of Belle Fontaine, at the confluence, was subsequently stationed near the spot by General Wilkinson. A few years after the close of the war American emigration commenced. This is supposed to have been the site, also, of one of the forts erected by La Salle on his second visit to the West.[93]

[93] Cap au Gris was a point of land on the Mississippi, in Calhoun County, Illinois, just above the mouth of the Illinois. J. M. Peck, in his *Gazetteer of Illinois* (1837),

As we ascended the Illinois, flourishing villages were constantly meeting the eye upon either bank of the stream. Among these were the euphonious names of Monroe, Montezuma, Naples, and Havana! At Beardstown the rolling prairie is looked upon for the first time; it afterward frequently recurs. As our steamer drew nigh to the renowned little city of Pekin, we beheld the bluffs lined with people of all sexes and sizes, watching our approach as we rounded up to the landing.[94] Some of our passengers, surprised at such a gathering together in such a decent, well-behaved little settlement as Pekin, sagely surmised the loss of a day from the calendar, and began to believe it the first instead of the last of the week, until reflection and observation induced the belief that other rites than those of religion had called the multitude together. Landing, streets, tavern, and groceries – which latter, be it spoken of the renowned Pekin, were like anything but "angel's visits" in recurrence – all were swarmed by a motley assemblage, seemingly intent upon *doing nothing*, and that, too, in the noisiest way. Here a congregation of keen-visaged worthies were gathered around a loquacious land-speculator, beneath the shadow of a sign-post,

from which Flagg derives his account of this place, says that a settlement had been formed there about forty years earlier. The town of this name is now in Lincoln County, Missouri. There is no foundation for the belief that La Salle had erected a fort here. – Ed.

[94] Montgomery, on the right bank of Illinois River, in Pike County, was laid out by an Alton Company, for a new landing. Naples is a small village in Scott County. Havana, founded in 1827, is the seat of justice for Mason County. Pekin is in Tazewell County. – Ed.

listening to an eloquent holding-forth upon the merits, relative and distinctive, of prairie land and bluff; there a cute-looking personage, with a twinkle of the eye and sanctimoniousness of phiz, was vending his wares by the token of a flaunting strip of red baize; while lusty viragoes, with infants at the breast, were battering their passage through the throng, crowing over a "bargain" on which the "cute" pedler had cleared not *more* than cent. per cent. And then there were sober men and men not sober; individuals half seas over and whole seas over, all in as merry trim as well might be; while, as a sort of presiding genius over the bacchanal, a worthy wag, tipsy as a satyr, in a long calico gown, was prancing through the multitude, with infinite importance, on the skeleton of an unhappy horse, which, between *nicking* and *docking*, a spavined limb and a spectral eye, looked the veritable genius of misery. The cause of all this commotion appeared to be neither more nor less than a redoubted "monkey show," which had wound its way over the mountains into the regions of the distant West, and reared its dingy canvass upon the smooth sward of the prairie. It was a spectacle by no means to be slighted, and "divers came from afar" to behold its wonders.

For nothing, perhaps, have foreign tourists in our country ridiculed us more justly than for that pomposity of nomenclature which we have delighted to apply to the thousand and one towns and villages sprinkled over our maps and our land; instance whereof this same renowned representative of the Celestial Empire concerning which I have been writing. Its brevity is its

sole commendation; for as to the taste or appropriateness of such a name for such a place, to say naught of the euphony, there's none. And then, besides Pekin, there are Romes, and Troys, and Palmyras, and Belgrades, Londons and Liverpools, Babels and Babylons *without account*, all rampant in the glories of log huts, with sturdy porkers forth issuing from their sties, by way, doubtless, of the sturdy knight-errants of yore caracoling from the sally-ports of their illustrious namesakes. But why, in the name of all propriety, this everlasting plagiarizing of the Greek, Gothic, Gallic patronymics of the Old World, so utterly incongruous as applied to the backwoods settlements of the New! If in very poverty of invention, or in the meagerness of our "land's language," we, as a people, feel ourselves unequal to the task – one, indeed, of no ordinary magnitude – of christening all the newborn villages of our land with melodious and appropriate appellations, may it not be advisable either to nominate certain worthy dictionary-makers for the undertaking, or else to retain the ancient Indian names? Why discard the smooth-flowing, expressive appellations bestowed by the injured aborigines upon the gliding streams and flowery plains of this land of their fathers, only to supersede them by affixes most foreign and absurd? "Is this proceeding just and honourable" towards that unfortunate race? Have we visited them with so *many* returns of kindness that this would overflow the cup of recompense? Why tear away the last and only relic of the past yet lingering in our midst? Have we too many memorials of the olden time? Why disrobe the

venerable antique of that classic drapery which alone can befit the severe nobility of its mien, only to deck it out in the starched and tawdry preciseness of a degenerate taste?

Illinois River.

X

"It is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land!
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree!
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand!"

Childe Harold.

"Good-evening, sir; a good-evening to ye, sir; pleased with our village, sir!" This was the frank and free salutation a genteel, farmer-looking personage, with a broad face, a broad-brimmed hat, and a broad-skirted coat, addressed to me as I stood before the inn door at Peoria, looking out upon her beautiful lake. On learning, in reply to his inquiry, "Whence do ye come, stranger?" that my birth spot was north of the Potomac, he hailed me with hearty greeting and warm grasp as a brother. "I am a Yankee, sir; yes, sir, I am a genuine export of the old 'Bay State.' Many years have gone since I left her soil; but I remember well the 'Mistress of the North,' with her green islands and blue waters. In my young days, sir, I wandered all over the six states, and I have not forgotten the valley of the Connecticut. I have seen the 'Emporium' with her Neapolitan bay, and I have looked on the 'city of the monuments and fountains;' but in all my journeyings, stranger, I have not found a spot so pleasant as

this little quiet Peoria of the Western wilderness!" Whether to smile in admiration or to smile at the oddity of this singular compound of truth and exaggeration, propounded, withal, in such grandiloquent style and language, I was at a loss; and so, just as every prudent man would have acted under the circumstances, *neither* was done; and the quiet remark, "You are an enthusiast, sir," was all that betrayed to the worthy man the emotions of the sublime and ridiculous of which he had been the unwitting cause.

But, truly, the little town with this soft Indian name is a beautiful place, as no one who has ever visited it has failed to remark. The incidents of its early history are fraught with the wild and romantic. The old village of Peoria was one of the earliest settlements of the French in the Mississippi Valley; and, many years before the memory of the present generation, it had been abandoned by its founders, a new village having been erected upon the present site, deemed less unhealthy than the former. The first house is said to have been built in new Peoria, or *La ville de Maillet*, as was its *nom de nique*, about the year 1778; and the situation was directly at the outlet of the lake, one mile and a half below the old settlement.[95] Its inhabitants

[95] Peoria, now the second largest city in Illinois, is situated a hundred and sixty miles southwest of Chicago, on the west bank and near the outlet of Lake Peoria, an expansion of the Illinois River. Its site was visited in 1680 by La Salle. Early in the eighteenth century a French settlement was made a mile and a half farther up, and named Peoria for the local Indian tribe. French missionaries were in this neighborhood as early as 1673-74. In 1788 or 1789 the first house was built on the present site of Peoria and by the close of the century the inhabitants of the old town, because of its more healthful location, moved to the new village of Peoria, which at first was called

consisted chiefly of that wild, semi-savage race of Indian traders, hunters, trappers, voyageurs, *couriers du bois*, and half-breeds, which long formed the sole link of union between the northern lakes and the southwest. After residing nearly half a century on this pleasant spot, in that happy harmony with their ferocious neighbours for which the early French were so remarkable, they were at length, in the autumn of 1812, exiled from their ancient home by the militia of Illinois, on charge of conniving at Indian atrocities upon our people, a party having been fired on at night while anchored before the village in their boats. The villagers fled for refuge to their friends upon the Mississippi. In the autumn of the succeeding year, General Howard,[96] with 1400

La Ville de Maillet, in honor of a French Canadian who commanded a company of volunteers in the War of the Revolution. Later the name was changed to its present form. At the opening of the War of 1812-15, the French inhabitants were charged with having aroused the Indians against the Americans in Illinois. Governor Ninian Edwards ordered Thomas E. Craig, captain of a company of Illinois militia, to proceed up the Illinois River and build a fort at Peoria. Under the pretense that his men had been fired upon by the inhabitants, when the former were peaceably passing in their boats, Craig burned half the town of Peoria in November, 1812, and transferred the majority of the population to below Alton. In the following year, Fort Clark – named in honor of General George Rogers Clark – was erected by General Benjamin Howard on this site; but after the close of the war the fort was burned by the Indians. After the affair of 1812, Peoria was not occupied, save occasionally, until 1819, when it was rebuilt by the Americans. The American Fur Company established a post there in 1824. See C. Ballance, *History of Peoria* (Peoria, 1870). – Ed.

[96] Benjamin Howard (1760-1814) was elected to the state legislature of Kentucky (1800), to Congress (1807-10); appointed governor of Upper Louisiana Territory (1810), and in March, 1813, brigadier-general of the United States army in command of the 8th military department. He died at St. Louis, September, 1814. – Ed.

men, ascended the Illinois; a fortress was constructed at Peoria in twelve days from timber cut on the opposite side of the lake. It was named Fort Clarke, and was occupied by a detachment of United States' troops. In course of a few weeks the whole frontier was swept of hostile Indians. On the termination of hostilities with Great Britain the fort was abandoned, and soon after was burned by the Indians, though the ruins are yet to be seen. The present settlement was commenced by emigrants but a few years since, and has advanced with a rapidity scarcely paralleled even in the West. Geographically, it is the centre of the state, and may at some future day become its seat of government. It is the shire town of a county of the same name; has a handsome courthouse of freestone; the neighbouring regions are fertile, and beds of bituminous coal are found in the vicinity. These circumstances render this spot, than which few can boast a more eventful history, one of the most eligible *locales* in the state for the emigrant.

Its situation is indescribably beautiful, extending along the lake of the same name, the Indian name of which was *Pinatahwee*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.