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BANVARID'S
GEOGRAPHICAL PANORAMA
OF THE
MISSISSIPPI RIVER,
WITH THE
Adventures of the Artist.

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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

DESCRIPTION

OF

BANVARD'S PANORAMA

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI RIVER,

PAINTED ON

THREE MILES OF CANVAS:

EXHIBITING A VIEW OF COUNTRY

1200 MILES IN LENGTH,

EXTENDING FROM THE

Mouth of the Missouri River to the City of New Orleans;

BEING BY FAR

The Largest Picture

EVER EXECUTED BY MAN.



BOSTON:

JOHN PUTNAM, PRINTER,

No. 81 Cornhill.

1847.

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ADVENTURES OF THE ARTIST.

[NOTE. As many inquiries respecting the past history of the artist have been made by those who have viewed his painting, at the suggestion of a number of his friends the following sketch of his adventures is inserted from the Christian Alliance, and Saturday Rambler, published in Boston.]

The subject of this sketch, Mr. JOHN BANVARD, was born in New York, and received his education at the High School in that city. He is the brother of Rev. Joseph Banvard, pastor of Harvard St. church, Boston, and author of several popular works. John showed the bent of his genius at a very early age. Being of delicate health, and confined in-doors much of his time, his favorite amusement was drawing and painting, and he thus became quite an accomplished draughtsman while yet a mere boy. While his more favored brothers were in the open air at play, he sometimes would be in his room projecting some instrument of natural science—a camera obscura, or solar microscope. He once came very near losing his eye sight, by the explosion of a glass receiver, in which he was collecting hydrogen gas. His room was quite a laboratory and museum. He constructed a respectable diorama of the sea, having moving boats, fish, and a naval engagement. He saved the pennies that were given him, and bought some types, and made a wooden printing press, and printed some hand-bills for his juvenile exhibition. We have one of them now in our possession, and it is quite a genteel specimen of typography.

Young Banvard was intimate with Woodworth, the poet, the author of the "Old Oaken Bucket," whose family were neighbors to his father. He evinced a great taste for poetry, at which he early began to try his versatile genius. He wrote some very pretty verses on La Fayette's arrival at this country, when he was about nine years of age. He has con-

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tinued occasionally to amuse his leisure hours in this way, up to the present time; and several of his poetical productions have recently appeared in the city papers: His poem of the *White Fawn*, which he recites to his audiences, in illustration of a scene in his beautiful picture, certainly stamps him a poet of no ordinary abilities.

When Banvard was about fifteen years of age, his family met with a severe reverse of fortune. His father lived just long enough to see his property, collected by frugal industry and perseverance, swept away from him by the mismanagement of an indiscreet partner, and his family turned houseless upon a pitiless world. John then went to the West, poor and friendless, and far away from his mother, brother and sisters, and those he held dear. He arrived at Louisville, Kentucky, sought employment, and procured a situation in a drug store; but this did not suit his taste. Instead of making pills, his employer would often find him with a piece of chalk or coal, sketching the likenesses of his fellow clerks upon the walls of the rooms, where they were putting up medicines. His employer told him he thought he could make better likenesses than he could pills. John thought so too, and so "threw physic to the dogs," and left the druggist.

We next find him engaged in his favorite employment of painting—he having made an engagement to ornament and decorate a public garden. But this concern soon failed and left him without money or employment. At this time he was about sixteen years old. Our hero, nothing daunted, by persevering labor obtained a little money, engaged a room, and pursued the business of painting for himself. The day had not arrived for success in his chosen pursuit; so being fond of adventure, he started down the river with some young men of his acquaintance, to seek anew his fortune.

When they had reached the mouth of the Saline river, they met with a disaster which had well nigh proved fatal to the young artist. The river was lashed by a terrific storm; the night was dark; the boat broke loose from its moorings. By great exertions of all hands on board, in pumping and bailing

all night, they succeeded in keeping the craft afloat, and made a safe landing. During this perilous night, our young adventurer, at the hazard of his own life, saved the life of one of his comrades who fell overboard. When day broke they discovered a stock boat but a few yards below them, whose proximity they had not discovered during the night, from the noise of the storm. It was an ill-fated night for the stock boat. It was sunk, all the stock was drowned, and the men were found sitting on the bank nearly frozen, whom the more fortunate party generously relieved. A large number of boats met with a similar fate with the stock boat, on that fatal night.

The next we find of Banvard, he is in the village of New Harmony, on the Wabash river, where in company with three or four other young men, he "got up" some dioramic paintings, fitted them up for public exhibition, in a flat boat which they built for the purpose, and started off down the Wabash with the intention of "coasting" that river into the Ohio, and so down the Mississippi to New Orleans; thus exhibiting to the sparse population of the wilderness specimens of the fine arts, at the same time replenishing their exhausted funds. This proved to be a very unfortunate speculation. The capital of the company gave out before they were able to complete their plans, and they left port with their boat in an unfinished condition, calculating to finish it with their first proceeds, they having invested their last few dimes in a supply of bacon, corn, meal and potatoes; but fate conspired against them. The river was low, and none of them had ever descended the Wabash; consequently they were ignorant of the channel, lodged on the sand bars, and hung on the snags until they exhausted their scanty supply of provisions. They at length found themselves fast on a sand bar, and down to their last peck of potatoes at the same time. They labored hard all day to get out of this predicament, but without success; and having roasted their last potatoes, they went to bed, or rather to bench, for their money gave out before they had procured bedding, and they had to content

themselves with the softest plank of their seats for their slumbers. Next morning they were up before the sun, with their spirits refreshed by a night's repose; but without any breakfast, they jumped into the water, and with their rails went stoutly to work again to force their boat over the bar. Over exertion, together with being in the water too long without food, brought a severe fit of ague upon Banvard. The bar upon which they were fast was called the "Bone Bank" bar, as, immediately opposite on the shore, the bank of the river was full of organic remains. Some of the large bones were then protruding out of the side of the bank in full view. As Banvard lay on the soft sand of the bar, (it was more comfortable than the hard plank of the boat) his head burning with the fever and his limbs scorched with pain, he looked at these gloomy relics of an antediluvian race, and felt as though his bones would soon be laid with them. But at sunset the rest of the company got the boat over the bar, took Banvard aboard, and landed in the woods, all nearly exhausted. Food was as scarce here as it was upon the bar, and all hands went supperless to bed. Next morning they started early, not intent on exhibiting specimens of the fine arts, but on obtaining something to eat, as by this time they were nearly half starved. But the contrary winds landed their luckless craft on Wabash Island, which was uninhabited. Here, fortunately, they found some pawpaws, and they all feasted voraciously on them except Banvard, who was too sick to eat any thing, and who lay upon one of the benches burning with a violent fever. Next day they sent their hand-bills down to the village of Shawneetown, which was in sight, about seven miles ahead, informing the inhabitants that something would be "done up brown" in the dioramic line that evening, at their wharf; and so there was; for as the company approached the wharf with their boat, no doubt with high expectations of a good supper, they observed a large audience awaiting their arrival. But the exhibition turned out different from what was expected. The boat lodged on a ledge of rocks about half a cable's length from

the shore. The men from the boat got out a line to the people on the wharf, who pulled with the same eagerness that the half starved company on board pushed and pried with their poles. But fate, regardless of the philosophy of action and reaction, as well as of the interests of the fine arts at Shawneetown, held the boat fast, and the audience went away without a sight of the paintings, and the artists to sleep again without a supper. That night the swells from a passing steamer lifted the boat from the rocks, and set it afloat down the river; and when those on board awoke in the morning they found themselves hard aground again on the Cincinnati bar, about eight miles below Shawneetown. The boat was got off with but little trouble, and they landed in a settlement. Here they were very liberal in their terms, as money was scarce, and they wanted to make sure of something to eat. A bushel of potatoes, a fowl, or a dozen of eggs, were good for an admission to their interesting exhibition. That night, after they got through, they had a luxurious supper. Fasting so long appeared to have done Banvard some good, for it starved the fever out of him, and in a few days he was entirely well.

The adventurers continued on with their boat, stopping at the settlements along the shore, and "astonishing the natives" with their dioramas. The boat was not very large, and if the audience collected too much on one side, the water would intrude over their low gunwales into the exhibition room. This kept the company by turns in the un-artist-like employment of pumping, to keep the boat from sinking. Sometimes the swells from a passing steamer would cause the water to rush through the cracks of the weather-boarding, and give the audience a bathing. Banvard says they made no extra charge for this part of the exhibition, although it was not mentioned in the programme.

Money being scarce, they were compelled to receive "truck and trade" for admissions, such as onions, potatoes, eggs, et cetera. It was no unusual thing to see a family coming to witness the "show boat," the father with a bushel of pota-

toes, the mother with a fowl, and the children with a pumpkin a-piece, for their admission fees. On a certain night, while they were exhibiting, some rogue let the boat loose, and it drifted off several miles down stream with the spectators, who were landed in a thick cane brake. They were obliged to make their way home as best they could.

At Plumb Point the boat was attacked by a party of the Murell robbers, a large organized banditti, who infested the country for miles around ; and here our hero came near losing his life. Several pistol shots were fired at him, but being in the dark, none of them took effect, although several lodged in the deck of the boat within a few inches of him. After a desperate resistance, during which one of the robbers was shot, the boat was rescued. During the encounter, one of the company received a severe wound in the arm from a Bowie knife, but the rest escaped unhurt. Mr. Banvard continued with the boat until it arrived at the Grand Gulf, where he obtained a commission to paint some views. He had found the receipts of the floating expedition to be more potatoes than dimes, more eggs than dollars; so he sold out his interest and left. We know nothing further of this expedition, but Banvard seems to have been satisfied with floating dioramas.

After this, Mr. Banvard engaged in painting at New Orleans, Natchez, and subsequently at Cincinnati and Louisville, and was liberally rewarded. Not content, however, he executed a very fine panorama of the city of Venice, and exhibited it in the West with considerable success, and afterwards sold it at a good price. Having accumulated a little capital, we next find him at St. Louis, as the proprietor of the St. Louis museum, which he had purchased of Mr. Koch, who had left it to exhibit his large skeleton of the Missourian. But here fate frowned again upon his efforts. He remained in St. Louis just long enough to lose all he had previously earned, and then left for Cincinnati, where he fared little better. He then procured a small boat and started down the Ohio river without a dime, and living several days

upon nuts which he collected from the woods. His next stopping place was a small town where he did some painting, and sold a revolving pistol which he had given twelve dollars for in St. Louis, for twenty-five dollars. With this capital he bought a larger boat, got some produce aboard, which he re-tailed out along shore; then sold his concern for fifty dollars. Having now a little capital, the young artist made several very successful speculations, and managed to make during this Quixotic expedition three thousand dollars. With the capital thus accumulated, he commenced his grand project of painting the Panorama of the Mississippi.

He procured a small skiff, and descended the river to make the necessary drawings, in the spring of 1840, and the first sketch was made just before he became of age. Had he been aware, when he commenced the undertaking, of the vast amount of labor it required, he would have shrunk from the task in dismay; but having commenced the work he was determined to proceed, being spurred on to its completion, perhaps, by the doubts of some of his friends to whom he communicated his project, as to its practicability, and by the assertions of some foreign writers, that "America had no artists commensurate with the grandeur and extent of her scenery." The idea of gain never entered his mind when he commenced the undertaking, but he was actuated by a patriotic and honorable ambition, that America should produce the *largest painting* in the world.

One of the greatest difficulties he encountered, was the preparatory labor he had to undergo in making the necessary drawings. For this purpose he had to travel thousands of miles alone in an open skiff, crossing and recrossing the rapid stream, in many places over two miles in breadth, to select proper points of sight from which to take his sketch; his hands became hardened with constantly plying the oar, and his skin as tawney as an Indian's, from exposure to the rays of the sun and the vicissitudes of the weather. He would be weeks together without speaking to a human being, having no other company than his rifle, which furnished him with

his meat from the game of the woods or the fowls of the river. When the sun began to sink behind the lofty bluffs, and evening to approach, he would select some secluded sandy cove, overshadowed by the lofty cotton wood, draw out his skiff from the water, and repair to the woods to hunt his supper. Having killed his game he would return, dress, cook, and from some fallen log would eat it with his biscuit, with no other beverage than the wholesome water of the noble river that glided by him. Having finished his lonely meal, he would roll himself in his blanket, creep under his frail skiff, which he turned over to shield him from the night dews, and with his portfolio of drawings for his pillow, and the sand of the bar for his bed, would sleep soundly till the morning; when he would arise from his lowly couch, eat his breakfast before the rays of the rising sun had dispersed the humid mist from the surface of the river,—then would start fresh to his task again. In this way he spent over four hundred days, making the preparatory drawings. Several nights during the time, he was compelled to creep from under his skiff where he slept, and sit all night on a log, and breast the pelting storm, through fear that the banks of the river would cave upon him, and to escape the falling trees. During this time, he pulled his little skiff more than two thousand miles. In the latter part of the summer he reached New Orleans. The yellow fever was raging in the city, but unmindful of that, he made his drawing of the place. The sun the while was so intensely hot, that his skin became so burnt that it peeled from off the back of his hands, and from his face. His eyes became inflamed by such constant and extraordinary efforts, from which unhappy effects he has not recovered to this day. His drawings completed, he erected a building at Louisville, Kentucky, to transfer them to the canvas. His object in painting his picture in the West was to exhibit it to, and procure testimonials from, those who were best calculated to judge of its fidelity,—the practical river men; and he has procured the names of nearly all the principal captains and

pilots navigating the Mississippi, freely testifying to the correctness of the scenery.

The following interesting letter from Lieutenant S. Woodworth, who passed through Louisville, bearer of despatches to Oregon and California, to his friend Gen. Morris, at New York, and published in the "National Press," of that city, gives a graphic description of the artist as he appeared at work upon his great painting.

"ST. LOUIS, April 13, 1846.

"MY DEAR GENERAL:—Here I am, in this beautiful city of St. Louis, and thus far 'on my winding way' to Oregon and California. In coming down the Ohio, our boat being of the larger class, and the river at a 'low stage,' we were detained several hours at Louisville, and I took advantage of the detention to pay a visit to an old school-mate of mine, one of the master spirits of the age. I mean Banvard, the artist, who is engaged in the herculean task of painting a panorama of the Mississippi river, upon more than *three miles of canvas!*—truthfully depicting a range of scenery of upwards of two thousand miles in extent. In company with a travelling acquaintance, an English gentleman, I called at the artist's studio, an immense wooden building, constructed expressly for the purpose, at the extreme outskirts of the city. After knocking several times, I at length succeeded in making myself heard, when the artist himself, in his working cap and blouse, pallet and pencil in hand, came to the door to admit us. He did not at first recognize me, but when I mentioned my name, he dropped both pallet and pencil, and clasped me in his arms, so delighted was he to see me, after a separation of sixteen years.

"My fellow-traveller was quite astonished at this sudden manifestation, for I had not informed him of our previous intimacy, but had merely invited him to accompany me to see in progress this wonder of the world, that is to be, this leviathan panorama. Banvard immediately conducted us into the interior of the building. He said he had selected the site for his building, far removed from the noise and bustle of the

town, that he might apply himself more closely and uninterruptedly to his labor, and be free from the intrusion of visitors. Within the studio, all seemed chaos and confusion, but the life-like and natural appearance of a portion of his great picture, displayed on one of the walls in a yet unfinished state. Here and there were scattered about the floor, piles of his original sketches, bales of canvas, and heaps of boxes. Paint-pots, brushes, jars and kegs were strewn about without order or arrangement, while along one of the walls several large cases were piled, containing rolls of finished sections of the painting. On the opposite wall was spread a canvas, extending its whole length, upon which the artist was then at work. A portion of this canvas was wound upon an upright roller, or drum, standing at one end of the building, and as the artist completes his painting he thus disposes of it. Not having the time to spare, I could not stay to have all the immense cylinders unrolled for our inspection, for we were sufficiently occupied in examining that portion on which the artist is now engaged, and which is nearly completed, being from the mouth of Red river to Grand Gulf. Any description of this gigantic undertaking that I should attempt in a letter, would convey but a faint idea of what it will be when completed. The remarkable truthfulness of the minutest objects upon the shores of the rivers, independent of the masterly style, and artistical execution of the work, will make it the most valuable historical painting in the world, and unequalled for magnitude and variety of interest, by any work that has ever been heard of since the art of painting was discovered. As a medium for the study of geography of this portion of our country, it will be of inestimable value. The manners and customs of the aborigines and the settlers—the modes of cultivating and harvesting the peculiar crops—cotton, sugar, tobacco, &c.—the shipping of the produce in all the variety of novel and curious conveyances employed on these rivers for transportation, are here so vividly portrayed, that but a slight stretch of the imagination would bring the noise of the puffing steamboats from the river and the

songs of the negroes in the fields, in music to the ear, and one seems to inhale the very atmosphere before him. Such was the impressions produced by our slight and unfavorable view of a portion of this great picture, which Banvard expects to finish this summer. It will be exhibited in New York in the autumn—after which it will be sent to London for the same purpose. The mode of exhibiting it is ingenious, and will require considerable machinery. It will be placed upon upright revolving cylinders, and the canvas will pass gradually before the spectator, thus affording the artist an opportunity of explaining the whole work. After examining many other beautiful specimens of the artist's skill, which adorn his studio, we dined together in the city. As our boat was now ready to start, I shook hands with Banvard, who parted from me with feelings as sad as they had been before joyful. His life has been one of curious interest, replete with stirring incidents, and I was greatly amused in listening to anecdotes of his adventures on these western rivers, where, for many years past, he has been a constant sojourner, indefatigably employed in preparing his great work.

WOODWORTH."

Mr. Banvard's money gave out just before he finished his picture. He endeavored to get credit for a few pieces of canvas to complete it, from the merchant of whom he had purchased the principal part of this material, and with whom he had expended hundreds of dollars while speculating on the river, but in vain. Fortunately he obtained a small job to decorate regalia for the Odd Fellows. With the avails he procured canvas to finish his picture. He was obliged, during all this time, to practice great economy. He split and carried his wood and water at night, after it was too dark to paint. When his picture was finished, he had not a single genteel suit of clothes. He endeavored to obtain credit for a coat from a person who professed to be his friend, but in vain. The Gas Company, too, before they would put up fixtures for him, ordered him to deposit *double* the amount of the

cost of such fixtures in their bank. To raise this amount, he *gave* a piece of philosophical apparatus to a society in the city, provided they bought fifty tickets in advance. They agreed to this, of course, as they desired the apparatus very much, as it was worth twice the amount they paid for the tickets.

The first night he opened in Louisville, he received not a cent. The night was rainy. The artist returned to his room with a sorrowful heart. But "there are better times a-coming." On the next night of exhibition, he received the enormous sum of *ten dollars*. Finally, the public became convinced that his picture was worth looking at, and then they rushed to see it by hundreds. The great painter left the city with a few thousand dollars. He went directly to Boston, where the work of art has been duly appreciated. Admiring thousands have visited it, and the enterprising artist is deservedly reaping a golden harvest.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

The Mississippi commences in many branches, that rise, for the most part, in wild rice lakes; but it traverses no great distance, before it has become a broad stream. Sometimes in its beginnings it moves, a wide expanse of waters, with a current scarcely perceptible, along a marshy bed. At others, its fishes are seen darting over a white sand, in waters almost as transparent as air. At other times it is compressed to a narrow and rapid current between ancient and hoary lime-stone bluffs. Having acquired in a length of course, following its meanders, of three hundred miles, a width of half a mile, and having formed its distinctive character, it precipitates its waters down the falls of St. Anthony. Thence it glides, alternately through beautiful meadows and deep forests, swelling in its advancing march with the tributes of an hundred streams. In its progress it receives a tributary, which of itself has a course of more than a thousand leagues. Thence it rolls its accumulated, turbid and sweeping mass of waters through continued forests, only broken here and there by the axe, in lonely grandeur to the sea. No thinking mind can contemplate this mighty and resistless wave, sweeping its proud course from point to point, curving round its bends through the dark forests, without a feeling of sublimity. The hundred shores, laved by its waters; the long course of its tributaries, some of which are already the abodes of cultivation, and others pursuing an immense course without a solitary dwelling of civilized man being seen on its banks; the numerous tribes of savages that now roam upon its borders; the affecting and imperishable traces of generations that are gone, leaving no other memorials of their existence, or materials for their history, than their tombs, that rise at frequent intervals along its banks; the dim, but glorious anticipations

of the future;—these are subjects of contemplation that cannot but associate themselves with the view of this river.

The Mississippi runs but a little distance from its source, as we have remarked, before it becomes a considerable stream. Below the falls of St. Anthony, it broadens to half a mile in width; and is a clear, placid and noble stream, with wide and fertile bottoms, for a long distance. A few miles below the river Des Moines, is a long rapid of nine miles, which, for a considerable part of the summer, is a great impediment to the navigation. Below these rapids, the river assumes its medial width and character from that point to the entrance of the Missouri. It is a still more beautiful river than the Ohio, somewhat gentler in its current, a third wider, with broad and clean sand bars, except in time of high waters, when they are all covered. At every little distance, there are islands, sometimes a number of them parallel and broadening the stream to a great width. These islands are many of them large, and have in the summer season an aspect of beauty, as they swell gently from the clear stream,—a vigor and grandeur of vegetation, which contribute much to the magnificence of the river. The sand bars, in the proper season, are the resort of innumerable swans, geese and water fowls. It is, in general, a full mile in width from bank to bank. For a considerable distance above the mouth of the Missouri, it has more than that width. Altogether, it has, from its alternate bluffs and prairies, the calmness and transparency of its waters, the size and beauty of its trees, an aspect of amenity and magnificence, which we have not seen belonging in the same extent to any other stream.

Where it receives the Missouri, it is a mile and a half wide. The Missouri itself enters with a mouth not more than half a mile wide. The united stream below has thence, to the mouth of the Ohio, a medial width of little more than three quarters of a mile. This mighty tributary seems rather to diminish, than increase its width; but it perceptibly alters its depth, its mass of waters, and, what is to be regretted, wholly changes its character. It is no longer the gentle, placid

stream, with smooth shores and clean sand bars; but has a furious and boiling current, a turbid and dangerous mass of sweeping waters, jagged and dilapidated shores, and, wherever its waters have receded, deposits of mud. It remains a sublime object of contemplation. The noble forest still rises along its banks. But its character of calm magnificence, that so delighted the eye above, is seen no more.

The bosom of the river is covered with prodigious boils, or swells, that rise with a whirling motion, and a convex surface, two or three rods in diameter, and no inconsiderable noise, whirling a boat perceptibly from its track. In its course, accidental circumstances shift the impetus of its current, and propel it upon the point of an island, bend, or sand bar. In these instances, it tears up the island, removes the sand bars, and sweeps away the tender, alluvial soil of the bends, with all their trees, and deposits the spoils in another place. At the season of high waters, nothing is more familiar to the ear of the people on the river, than the deep crash of a land-slip, in which larger or smaller masses of the soil on the banks, with all the trees, are plunged into the stream. Such is its character from Missouri to the Balize; a wild, furious, whirling river,—never navigated safely, except with great caution.

No person, who descends this river for the first time, receives clear and adequate ideas of its grandeur, and the amount of water which it carries. If it be in the spring, when the river below the mouth of the Ohio is generally over its banks, although the sheet of water, that is making its way to the gulf, is perhaps thirty miles wide, yet finding its way through deep forests and swamps that conceal all from the eye, no expanse of water is seen, but the width that is curved out between the outline of woods on either bank; and it seldom exceeds, and oftener falls short of a mile. But when he sees, in descending from the falls of St. Anthony, that it swallows up one river after another, with mouths as wide as itself, without affecting its width at all; when he sees it receiving in succession the mighty Missouri, the broad Ohio, St.

Francis, White, Arkansas, and Red rivers, all of them of great depth, length and volume of water; when he sees this mighty river absorbing them all, and retaining a volume, apparently unchanged,—he begins to estimate rightly the increasing depths of current that must roll on its deep channel to the sea. Carried out of the Balize, and sailing with a good breeze for hours, he sees nothing on any side but the white and turbid waters of the Mississippi, long after he is out of sight of land.

Touching the features of the country through which it passes, from its source to the falls of St. Anthony, it moves alternately through wild rice lakes and swamps, by lime-stone bluffs and craggy hills; occasionally through deep pine forests, and beautiful prairies; and the tenants on its borders, are elk, buffaloes, bears and deer, and the savages that pursue them. In this distance, there is not a civilized inhabitant on its shores, if we except the establishments of Indian traders, and a garrison of the United States. Buffaloes are seldom seen below these falls. Its alluvials become wide, fertile, and, for the most part, heavily timbered. Like the Ohio, its bottoms and bluffs generally alternate. Its broad and placid current is often embarrassed with islands, which are generally rich alluvial lands, often containing from five hundred to a thousand acres, and abounding with wild turkeys and other small game. For one hundred miles above the mouth of the Missouri, it would be difficult for us to convey an idea of the beauty of the prairies, skirting this noble river. They impress the eye, as a perfect level; and are in summer covered with a luxuriant growth of grass and flowers, without a tree or bush.

Above the mouth of the Missouri, to the rapids of Des Moines, the medial width of the bottom valley, in which the river rolls, measured from bluff to bluff, is not far from six miles. Below the mouth of the Missouri to that of the Ohio, is not far from eight miles. The last stone bluffs of the Mississippi are seen, in descending, about thirty miles above the mouth of the Ohio. Below these, commences on the Missis-

issippi, as is seen on the Ohio for some distance above its mouth, the aspect of a timbered bottom on either side, boundless to the vision. Below the mouth of the Ohio, the alluvion broadens from thirty to fifty miles in width; still expanding to the Balize, where it is probably three times that width. We express these widths in terms of doubt, because three fifths of the alluvion, below the mouth of the Ohio, is either dead swamp of cypress forest, or stagnant lakes, or creeping bayous, or impenetrable cane brakes, great part of it inundated; perhaps traversed in a straight direction from bluff to bluff, scarcely once in a year, and never explored, except in cases of urgent necessity. The bluffs, too, are winding, swelling in one direction, and indented in another, and at least as serpentine as the course of the river.

Between the mouth of the Ohio and St. Louis, on the west side of the river, the bluffs are generally near it, seldom diverging from it more than two miles. They are, for the most part, perpendicular masses of lime-stone; sometimes shooting up into towers and pinnacles, presenting, as Mr. Jefferson well observed, at a distance, the aspect of the battlements and towers of an ancient city. Sometimes the river sweeps the bases of these perpendicular bluffs, as happens at the Cornice rocks, and at the cliffs above St. Genevieve. They rise here, between two and three hundred feet above the level of the river. There are many imposing spectacles of this sort, near the western bank of the Mississippi, in this distance. We may mention among them that gigantic mass of rocks, forming a singular island in the river, called the "Grand Tower," and the shot towers at Herculaneum.

From the sources of the river to the mouth of the Missouri, the annual flood ordinarily commences in March, and does not subside until the last of May; and its medial height is fifteen feet. Between the mouth of the Ohio and the St. Francis, there are various shoal places, where pilots are often perplexed to find a sufficient depth of water, when the river is low. Below that point, there is no difficulty for vessels of any draught, except to find the right channel. Below the

mouth of the Ohio, the medial flood is fifty feet; the highest sixty. Above Natchez, the flood begins to decline. At Baton Rouge, it seldom exceeds thirty feet; and at New Orleans, twelve. Some have supposed this gradual diminution of the flood to result from the draining of the numerous effluxes of the river, that convey away such considerable portions of its waters by separate channels to the sea. To this should be added, no doubt, the check, which the river at this distance begins to feel from the re-action of the sea, where this mighty mass of descending waters finds its level.

One of the most striking peculiarities of this river, and of all its lower tributaries, has not often been a theme of observation in describing it. It is the uniformity of its meanders, called in the phrase of the country, its "points and bends." In many instances these curves are described with a precision, with which they would have been marked off by the sweep of a compass. The river sweeps round, perhaps, the half a circle, and is precipitated from the point, in a current diagonally across its own channel, to another curve of the same regularity upon the opposite shore. In the bend is the deepest channel, the heaviest movement of water, and what is called the thread of the current. Between this thread and the shore, there are generally counter currents, or eddies; and in the crumbling and tender alluvial soil, the river is generally making inroads upon its banks on the bend side. Opposite the bend there is always a sand bar, matched, in the convexity of its conformation, to the concavity of the bend. Here it is, that the appearance of the young cotton wood groves have their most striking aspect. The trees rise from the shore, showing first the vigorous saplings of the present year; and then those of a date of two and three years; and trees rising in regular gradation to the most ancient and lofty point of the forest. These curves are so regular on this, and all the rivers of the lower country, that the boatmen and Indians calculate distances by them; and instead of the number of miles or leagues, they estimate their progress by the number of bends they have passed.

THE PANORAMA.



RUSH ISLAND

And Bar, with the wreck of the steamer West Wind, snagged here in June, 1846,—at the same time the artist was painting this portion of the river. This was a very unfortunate boat, having been previously blown up, and killing a large number of persons.

BLUFFS OF SELMA.

These bluffs have a very striking and majestic appearance, varying from two to four hundred feet in height; some of them are beautifully variegated, and resemble the façades of mighty temples,—the face of them having uniform arches, and carved niches, almost as regular and order-like as if they were chiselled out by the hands of man.

HERCULANEUM,

Standing as it were in an immense natural amphitheatre. The high rock below the town has a very peculiar castle-like appearance. Further up the river, we have the “Cornice Rocks” and the Cornice Island.

PLATEEN ROCKS,

Extending ten or twelve miles along the bank of the river; they have a wild, romantic appearance, some of them shoot-

ing up into towers and spires, and, as Jefferson remarks, not unlike those of cities.

JEFFERSON BARRACKS,

Pleasantly situated on a low hill, which rises gradually from the river, presenting a very fine view to the spectator passing on a boat, and calling up patriotic emotions as he beholds the noble star-spangled banner waving, with graceful folds, in the loyal western air.

VIDE POCHE, (or, in English, Empty Pocket.)

In the style of building, the taste and simplicity of the old French settlers are very apparent. The French have a fashion of annually white-washing their houses, which produces a pleasing appearance when viewed from a distance. There were a number of villages settled by the French in this neighborhood—one at Kaskaskia, one at Vincennes, and several others. They were all characterized as a people of great simplicity and innocence of life—social, disinterested, fond of sport and gaiety; but destitute of that enterprise, energy of character, and aspiring disposition, which the Americans exhibit. Their lands were generally held and cultivated in common, and their little communities constituted, as it were, but one great family.

UNITED STATES ARSENAL.

It is beautifully situated on a gentle declivity immediately below the city, at the foot of "the bar." A short distance below the arsenal commence some rocky bluffs, upon which are situated, very prominently, several lofty shot towers; they have a very striking appearance when viewed from the river.

ST. LOUIS.

St. Louis is one of the oldest and first settled towns in the Mississippi Valley. It was settled and occupied by the

French, until the country was purchased by the American Government. It is, and always has been, the commercial capital of the country now forming the State of Missouri. Since the Americans begun to take the lead in St. Louis, and introduced our laws and enterprise, a new impulse has been given to its improvement, commerce, and prosperity. The situation of the town is very beautiful. It stands on a kind of second bottom, that rises gently from the river to a considerable eminence. Having surmounted this bank, an extensive plain opens to view. In the immediate vicinity of the town, this plain is covered with bushes and shrub oaks. Beyond is an extensive belt of grassy plain or naked prairie. The timber for several miles has been cut away for fuel. The eye reposes, in the spring and summer months, with pleasure upon this sweep of verdure, bounded on the verge of the horizon with forests, and also upon the level bottom and noble forests on the opposite shore of the river. The town has extended itself along the hill; and some of the best houses are built on that pleasant elevation. The number of the Americans now predominates over that of the French; but the population is made up of emigrants from all parts of the world. There is no town in the western country more favorably situated as the seat of an immense trade. It is nearly in the centre of the Mississippi Valley, commanding the trade of the Missouri, the upper Mississippi, and the Illinois, with the vast and almost boundless country watered by these gigantic streams. The fur trade of this immense country already centres here. It is the depot of the numberless lead mines in this region of country, and all the produce and merchandize of the country above it. It has this obvious advantage over any town on the Ohio, that steamboats can run between here and New Orleans at the lowest stages of water. A great number of steamboats, and river craft of all descriptions, bound to all points of the boatable waters of the Mississippi, are seen at all seasons of the year lying in the harbor. Miners, trappers, hunters, adventurers, emigrants, and people of all character and languages, meet here, and dis-

perse in pursuit of their various objects, in every direction, some even beyond the remotest points of civilization. Population about 60,000.

BLOODY ISLAND.

The name being given to it from the number of duels that have been fought within its shades.

MISSOURI RIVER.

This is the largest tributary of the Mississippi river, discharging more water into the channel than the Upper Mississippi itself: in fact, it is the longer river of the two. At its confluence it is about half a mile wide; the united stream from this point to the mouth of the Ohio has a medial breadth of about a mile. This mighty tributary appears rather to diminish, than to increase the width, but it materially alters the depth of the channel.

A short distance above the mouth of the Missouri stands the town of Alton, situated at the base of a beautiful bluff, which rolls in on the river in a graceful outline clearly defined against bright sky beyond.

Immediately in the foreground, under the shade of some stately elms, is an encampment of Shawnee Indians; the warriors reclining lazily upon the greensward, while their squaws are preparing their rude repast.

Below the junction of the Missouri stand out in fine relief, some very beautiful islands, clad in the brightest verdure.

MOUTH OF THE OHIO.

This is a very beautiful stream, called by the French, "La Belle Rivere." Its banks are thickly settled, and contain many fine cities.

The spectator has, at the Mouth of the Ohio, a view of *three States at one time*. To his right, he will see the State of Kentucky; in the centre, between the two rivers, the State of Illinois; to his left, the state of Missouri. On the delta of the two rivers stands the city of

CAIRO,

Laid off by speculators, and fast going to decay.

N. B. The views of the painting above the mouth of the Ohio are all on the western shore; below the Ohio they are all on the eastern shore.

IRON BANKS

And the town of Columbus are the first objects that strike the eye of the voyager after passing the Ohio. They are introduced into the picture by moonlight, with the magnificent steamer Peytona wooding; one of the largest and fastest boats on the river, commanded by Capt. John Shallcross, a well known and gentlemanly commander of the West. In the distance can be seen the

CHALK BANKS,

A high bluff of white clay, and falling nearly perpendicularly to the river, which washes its base.

MILLS POINT.

This is not a point of the river, but a point or spur of high lands that strike into the river, and affords an excellent location for a town. In the foreground of the view is a diving bell at work on the wreck of a steamer.

INDIAN MOUNDS

And Island Number Twenty-Five. The islands on the Mississippi, below the Mouth of the Ohio, have all been numbered; but, at present, the numbers are very irregular, owing to the circumstance of many being washed away by the force of the moving waters; the "chutes" of others "growing up," as it is termed, and new ones continually forming.

This "growing up" of the islands of the Mississippi, is one of the most striking characteristics of this mighty river, and one that would not present itself to the eye of a voyager in

passing along the stream, unless the islands that were growing up were pointed out, and the philosophy explained to him. This singular peculiarity even escaped the observation of Mr. Flint, as he makes no allusion to it in his excellent description of the Mississippi, contained in his geography of the Western States.

The cause of this "growing up" of the islands is this:—Where the current strikes diagonally off from a point above the head of an island, the eddying waters produce a sand bar under the point at the mouth of the "chute," or channel, round the island. Upon this bar collects the alluvial soil of the river, from which spring the young cotton woods,—and being of very rapid growth, soon shoot up into tall trees and completely shut out the channel from the view of the river. The "chutes" behind the islands then form lakes. Upon the waters of these lakes congregate all kind of aquatic fowls,—swans, geese, ducks, pelicans, and the like. These lakes are likewise the resort of alligators.

PLUMB POINT.

This is one of the most difficult places to boatmen on the Mississippi, from the frequency of the change of channel, the snags, bars, and sawyers. A large number of steam, and other boats, have been lost here. It was a short distance from this place where Murrell, the notorious land pirate and robber, had his encampment.

When the artist first descended the river, the small flat boat on which he was travelling laid by here; and during the night the boat was attacked by these robbers, and it was only by a desperate resistance, during which one of the robbers was shot, that the boat was rescued, after cutting the lines and leaving them on the shore. During the conflict, Mr. Banvard had a volley of shot fired at him,—the balls whistling past and splashing in the river by him; but, fortunately, none of them took effect, although several struck in the planking of the boat, only a few inches from him.

FULTON,

On the First Chickasaw Bluffs, an unimportant town, with the town of

RANDOLPH,

On the Second Chickasaw Bluffs, seen in the distance; the view looking down the chute of No. Thirty-Four.

MEMPHIS.

This city is beautifully situated on the Fourth Chickasaw Bluffs, presenting a very fine appearance as you descend the river. It is laid off in regular streets, and, under the impulse of its enterprising citizens, it is fast rising in importance. It is advantageously situated for trade, being a great shipping point for cotton. The United States Naval Depot is located here. From the improvements already made and in progress, Memphis bids fair to become a very important place of business. It is situated in the south-western corner of the State of Tennessee. On the lower end of the "Fourth Bluffs," is situated the town of

FORT PICKERING,

A new place laid off by speculators. It is very handsomely situated opposite the head of

PRESIDENT'S ISLAND,

A large and beautiful island, which divides the river just below. Here the voyager will begin to see fine cotton plantations, with the slaves working in the cotton fields. He will see the beautiful mansions of the planters, rows of "negro quarters;" and lofty cypress trees, the pride of the Southern forests. A little farther down he passes the town of

COMMERCE,

Situated at the head of a deep bend of the river.

STACK ISLAND,

By moonlight. Here we have a beautiful view of about ten miles up the river,—the island in the centre reposing quietly upon the surface of the river, which is broken by the ripples of a passing steamer,—the moon observed aloft, shedding its mellow light and gilding the surrounding landscape with its silvery hues.

Here we have the first view of the Spanish Moss, hanging in gloomy grandeur from the bough of the cypress trees; likewise the Palmetto, with its broad, fan-like leaf, the lofty Cotton Wood, the sea grass, the impenetrable canebrake, and all the concomitants of a Southern forest.

VICKSBURG,

Situated on the Walnut Hills. These hills come in and extend along on the river for about two miles. They rise boldly, though gradually, with alternate swells and gullies, to the height of nearly 500 feet; and present one of the most beautiful prospects to be met with on the lower Mississippi. At the lower end, the city of Vicksburg is situated, on the shelving declivities of the hills, and the houses are scattered in groups on the terraces, and present a very striking view as the spectator descends the river. A few miles farther down will be seen the small town of

WARRENTON,

The seat of justice for Warren County, Mississippi.

PALMYRA ISLAND,

With the steamer Uncle Sam. This is one of the finest boats on the river, commanded by clever officers, and makes very regular trips from Louisville to New Orleans. All the steamboats introduced into the Panorama of the Mississippi, are correct likenesses of boats that are now plying on those waters.

In the foreground of this view we have a wood yard, and

the Pecan tree tresselled with the Muscadine vine. After passing these, we come to the city of

GRAND GULF,

Situated at the base of a bold and solitary bluff. A few miles below this is the

PETITE GULF

And the town of Rodney. A few miles below Rodney, near the point, stands a very fine cotton plantation belonging to General Taylor.

NATCHEZ.

This city is romantically situated on a very high bluff of the east bank of the river, and is much the largest town in the State of Mississippi. The river business is transacted in that part of the city which is called "under the hill." Great number of boats are always lying here. Some very respectable merchants reside in this part of the city. The upper town is elevated on the summit of the bluff, 300 feet above the level of the river, and commands a fine prospect of the surrounding landscape. The country on the eastern bank is waving, rich, and beautiful; the eminences presenting open woods, covered with grape vines, and here and there neat country houses. This part of the town is quiet; the streets broad; some of the public buildings are handsome; and the whole has the appearance of comfort and opulence. Many rich planters live here; and the society is polished and respectable. It is the principal town in this region for the shipment of cotton, with bales of which, at the proper seasons of the year, the streets are almost barricaded; and it is the market for the trade of the numerous population of the contiguous country. Notwithstanding the elevation, and apparent healthiness of the city, it has often been visited by the yellow fever. It is owing to this circumstance, that the population does not increase so fast as might be expected from its eligible

position. It is, at present, supposed to contain 5000 inhabitants. It is 300 miles above New Orleans.

ELLIS'S CLIFFS.

These cliffs have a very peculiar and majestic appearance; being of sand, the rains are washing them off into a variety of fanciful shapes, some of them resembling towers and battlements. After passing these, the traveller will see the little town of

FORT ADAMS,

Romantically situated on the side of a beautiful hill, with a noble bluff just below the village, called Loftus's Heights. Here are the remains of an old fort, erected during the administration of John Adams, in honor of whom it was named.

BAYOU SARA,

By moonlight. A short distance above this town stands an old dead tree scathed by the fire, where three negroes were burnt alive. Each of them had committed murder: one of them murdered his mistress and her two daughters. After passing Bayou Sara, the traveller will see some very beautiful cliffs, called the

WHITE CLIFFS,

On which are situated the small towns of Port Hudson and Port Hickey, and immediately below these is the very picturesque and romantic looking

PROPHET'S ISLAND.

Here formerly lived and died Wotongo, an Indian prophet, —the last of his tribe.

BATON ROUGE.

This is now the capital of the state of Louisiana. This place is handsomely situated on the last bluff that is seen in

the descending river. The site is thirty or forty feet above the highest overflow of the river. This bluff rises from the river by a gentle and gradual swell. The United States' barracks here are built in a fine style; and are supposed to be among the handsomest and most commodious of that kind of works. From the esplanade, the prospect is delightful, commanding a great extent of the coast, with its handsome houses, and rich cultivation below; and an extensive view of the back country at the east. The city is tolerably compact, and has a number of neat houses. The town itself, especially in the months when the greatest verdure prevails, as seen from a boat in the river, rising with such a fine swell from the banks, and with its singularly shaped French and Spanish houses, and its green squares, looks like a finely painted landscape.

From Baton Rouge, the river below to New Orleans, is lined with splendid sugar plantations, and what is generally termed the "Coast,"—a strip of land on either side of the river extending back to the cypress swamps, about two miles. It is the richest soil in the world, and will raise nearly all the tropical fruits,—oranges, figs, olives, and the like. This coast is protected from inundations by an embankment of earth of six or eight feet in height, called a levee. Behind the levee, we see extensive sugar fields, noble mansions, beautiful gardens, large sugar houses, groups of negro quarters, lofty churches, splendid villas, presenting, in all, one of the finest views of country to be met with in the United States. The inhabitants are chiefly native French or Creoles.

Just before arriving at New Orleans, will be seen a beautifully situated town in the bend above, called

CARROLTON.

From this point there is a railroad extending to the centre of New Orleans. After passing a left hand point, the traveller will be off the city of

LA FAYETTE,

This is attached to New Orleans, but under a separate corporation. It is where all the flat boats land that descend the river.

NEW ORLEANS.

This is the great commercial emporium of the South, situated on the *eastern* shore of the river, in a bend so deep and sinuous, that the sun rises to the inhabitants of the city over the *opposite* shore. It stands in latitude north, $29^{\circ} 57'$, and $13^{\circ} 9'$ west from Washington, and about one thousand miles from the mouth of the Ohio river, and a little more than one thousand two hundred miles from the mouth of the Missouri.

Viewed from the harbor on a sunny day, no city offers a more striking panoramic view. It envelopes the beholder something in the form of a crescent. An area of many acres, covered with all the grotesque variety of flat boats, keel boats, and water crafts of every description, that have floated from all points of the valley above, lines the upper part of the shore. Steamboats rounding to, or sweeping away, cast their long horizontal streams of smoke behind them. Sloops, schooners, brigs and ships occupy the wharves, arranged below each other in the order of their size, showing a forest of masts. The foreign aspect of the stuccoed houses in the city proper, the massive buildings of the Fauxbourg St. Mary, the bustle and movement on every side, all seen at one view in the bright coloring of the brilliant sun and sky of the climate, present a splendid spectacle.

LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

The greater part of the commercial intercourse of the country is with New Orleans, by the river Mississippi, in boats. These are so various in their kinds, and so curious in their construction, that it would be difficult to reduce them to specific classes and divisions. No form of water craft so whimsical, no shape so outlandish, can well be imagined, but what, on descending to New Orleans, it may somewhere be seen lying to the shore, or floating on the river. The New York canal is generating monstrous conceptions of this sort; and there will soon be a rivalry between the East and the West, which can create the most ingenious floating river monsters of passage and transport.

But the boats of passage and conveyance, that remain after the invention of steam boats, and are still important to those objects, are keel boats, and flats. The flat boats are called, in the vernacular phrase, "Kentucky flats," or "broad horns." They are simply an oblong ark, with a roof slightly curved from the centre to shed rain. They are generally about fifteen feet wide, and from fifty to eighty, and sometimes an hundred feet in length. The timbers of the bottom are massive beams, and they are intended to be of great strength, and to carry a burden of from two to four hundred barrels. Great numbers of cattle, hogs and horses are conveyed to market in them. We have seen family boats of this description, fitted up for the descent of families to the lower country,

with a stove, comfortable apartments, beds, and arrangements for commodious habitancy. We see in them, ladies, servants, cattle, horses, sheep, dogs and poultry, all floating on the same bottom; and on the roof, the looms, ploughs, spinning wheels and domestic implements of the family.

Much of the produce of the upper country, even after the invention of steam boats, continues to descend to New Orleans in Kentucky flats. They generally carry three hands, and perhaps a supernumerary fourth hand, a kind of supercargo. This boat, in the form of a parallelogram, lying flat and dead in the water, and with square timbers below its bottom planks, and carrying such a great weight, runs on a sand bar with a strong headway, and ploughs its timbers into the sand; and it is of course a work of extreme labor to get the boat afloat again. Its form and its weight render it difficult to give it a direction with any power of oars. Hence, in the shallow waters, it often gets aground. When it has at length cleared the shallow waters, and gained the heavy current of the Mississippi, the landing such an unwieldy water craft, in such a current, is a matter of no little difficulty and danger.

All the toil, and danger, and exposure, and moving accidents of this long and perilous voyage, are hidden, however, from the inhabitants, who contemplate the boats floating by their dwellings on beautiful spring mornings, when the verdant forest, the mild and delicious temperature of the air, the delightful azure of the sky of this country, the fine bottom on the one hand, and the romantic bluff on the other, the broad and smooth stream rolling calmly down the forest, and floating the boat gently forward, present delightful images and associations to the beholders. At this time, there is no visible danger, or call for labor. The boat takes care of itself; and little do the beholders imagine, how different a scene may be presented in half an hour. Meantime, one of the hands scrapes a violin, and the others dance. Greeting, or rude defiance, or trials of wit, or proffers of love to the girls on shore, or saucy messages, are scattered between them and the spectators along the banks. The boat glides on until it disap-

pears behind the point of wood. At this moment, perhaps, the bugle, with which all the boats are provided, strikes up its note in the distance over the water. These scenes, and these notes, echoing from the bluffs of the noble Mississippi, have a charm for the imagination, which although heard a thousand times repeated, at all hours and positions, present the image of a tempting and charming youthful existence, that naturally inspires a wish to be a boatman.

No wonder that to the young, who are reared in these remote regions, with that restless curiosity which is fostered by solitude and silence, and who witness scenes like this so frequently, the severe and unremitting labors of agriculture, performed directly in the view of such spectacles, should become tasteless and irksome. No wonder, that the young, along the banks of the great streams, should detest the labors of the field, and embrace every opportunity, either openly, or if minors, covertly to escape, and devote themselves to the pernicious employment of boating. In this view, we may account for the detestation of the inhabitants, along these great streams, of steam boats, which are continually diminishing the number of all other boats and boatmen, and which have already withdrawn probably ten thousand from that employment. We have seen what is the character of this employment, notwithstanding all its seductions. In no employment do the hands so soon wear out. It is comparatively but a few years, since these waters have been navigated in any way. Yet at every bend, and every high point of the rivers, where you go on shore for a moment, you may expect to see the narrow mound, and the rude monument, and the coarse memorial carved on an adjoining tree by brother boatmen, to mark the spot where an exhausted boatman yielded his breath and was buried.

A good landing place on the Mississippi, towards evening, generally brings up the descending flat boats, where they lay by all night; and this is an excellent point of observation, from which to contemplate their aspect, the character of boating and the descriptions and the amount of produce from the

upper country. You can here take an imaginary voyage to the Falls of St. Anthony, or Missouri; to the lead mines of Rock River, or to Chicago of Lake Michigan; to Tippecanoe of the Wabash, Orleanne point of the Alleghany, Brownsville of the Monongahela, the Saline of the Kenhawa, or the mountains, round whose bases winds the Tennessee; or, if you choose, you may take the cheap and rapid journey of thought along the courses of an hundred other rivers; and in the lapse of a few days' residence in the spring, at this point, you may see boats, which have arrived here from all these imagined places. The boisterous gaiety of the hands, the congratulations of acquaintances, who have met here from immense distances, the moving picture of life on board the boats, in the numerous animals, large and small, which they carry, their different loadings, the evidence of the increasing agriculture above, and, more than all, the immense distances which they have already traversed, afford a copious fund of meditation. In one place there are boats loaded with pine plank, from the pine forests of the south-west of New York. In another quarter there are numerous boats with the "Yankee notions" of Ohio. In another quarter are landed together the boats of "old Kentucky," with their whiskey, hemp, tobacco, bagging and bale rope; with all the articles of the produce of their soil. From Tennessee there are the same articles, together with boats loaded with bales of cotton. From Illinois and Missouri, cattle, horses, and the general produce of the western country, together with peltry and lead from Missouri. Some boats are loaded with corn in bulk and in the ear. Others with barrels of apples and potatoes, and great quantities of dried apples and peaches. Others have loads of cider, that has been strengthened by boiling, or freezing. Other boats are loaded with furniture, tools, domestic and agricultural implements; in short, the numerous products of the ingenuity, speculation, manufacture and agriculture of the whole upper country of the West. They have come from regions, thousands of miles apart. They have floated to a common point of union. The surface of the boats covers

some acres. Fowls are fluttering over the roofs, as invariable appendages. The piercing note of the chanticleer is heard. The cattle low. The horses trample, as in their stables. The swine utter the cries of fighting with each other. The turkeys gobble. The dogs of an hundred regions become acquainted. The boatmen travel about from boat to boat, make inquiries and acquaintances, agree to "lash boats," as it is called, and form alliances to yield mutual assistance to each other on the way to New Orleans. After an hour or two passed in this way, they spring on shore, to "raise the wind" in the village. If they tarry all night, as is generally the case, it is well for the people of the town if they do not become riotous in the course of the evening; in which case, strong measures are adopted, and the proceedings on both sides are summary and decisive. With the first dawn, all is bustle and motion; and amidst shouts, and trampling of cattle, and barking of dogs, and crowing of the fowls, the fleet is in half an hour all under-weigh; and when the sun rises, nothing is seen but the broad stream rolling on as before. These boats unite once more at Natchez and New Orleans; and although they live on the same river, it is improbable that they will ever meet again on the earth.

In passing below, we often see a number of boats lashed, and floating together. In travelling over the roofs of the floating town, you have a considerable walk. These associations have various objects. Boats so united, as is well known, float considerably faster. Perhaps the object is to barter, and obtain supplies. Perhaps it is to kill beef or pork, for fresh provisions. Apples, cider, nuts, dried fruit, whiskey, peach brandy, and drams are retailed; and the concern is, for a while, one of great merriment and good will. Unforeseen moral storms arise; and the partnership, which began in a frolic, ends in a quarrel. The aggrieved discharge a few mutual volleys of the compliments usually interchanged on such occasions, unleash, and each one manages his boat in his own way.

The order of things in the western country, naturally fos-

ters a propensity for a floating life on the water. The inhabitants will ultimately become as famous as the Chinese, for having their habitancy in boats. In time of high waters at the mouth of the Ohio, we were on board an immensely large flat boat on which was "kept a town," which had figured in the papers, as a place that bade fair to rival the ancient metropolis of the Delta of the Nile. The tavern, the retail and dram shops, together with the inhabitants, and no small number of very merry customers, floated on the same bottom. We have seen a large tinner's establishment floating down the Mississippi. It was a respectable manufactory; and the articles were sold wholesale and retail. There were three apartments, and a number of hands. When they had mended all the tin, and vended all that they could sell in one place, they floated on to another.

A piece goods store, united with a bookstore, is no uncommon establishment. We have heard of a large floating blacksmith's establishment; and of another, in which it was contemplated to work a trip hammer. Besides the numerous periogues, or singular looking Spanish and French trading retail boats, commonly called "chicken thieves," which scour the rivers within an hundred leagues of New Orleans, there are on all the waters of the West, retail trading boats. They are often fitted up with no inconsiderable ingenuity and show. The goods are fancifully arranged on shelves. The delicate hands of the vender would bear a comparison with those of the spruce clerk behind our city counters. Every considerable landing place on the waters of the Ohio and Mississippi has, in the spring, a number of stationary and inhabited boats lying by the shores. They are too often dram shops, and resorts of all kinds of bad company. A severe inquiry ought to be instituted at all these points, respecting the inmates and practices of these floating mansions of iniquity.

There is no portion of the globe, where the invention of steamboats should be so highly appreciated, as in the valley of the Mississippi. This invention deserves to be estimated the most memorable era of the West; and the name of the

inventor ought to be handed down with glory to the generations to come. No triumph of art over the obstacles of nature has ever been so complete. But for this invention, this valley might have sustained a nation of farmers and planters; and the comforts, the arts, refinement and intelligence of the day would have made their way slowly from New Orleans to the lakes, the sources of the Mississippi, and the Rocky Mountains. Thousands of boatmen would have been slowly and laboriously warping, and rowing, and poling, and cordelling their boats in a three months' trip up these mighty and long streams, which are now ascended by steamboats in ten days. It may be safely asserted, that in many respects, the improvements of fifty years without steamboats, were brought to this country in five years after their invention. The distant points of the Ohio and the Mississippi used to be separated by distances and obstacles of transit more formidable, in the passing, than the Atlantic. These points are now brought into juxtaposition. Distances on the rivers are not indeed annihilated; but they are diminished to about an eighth of their former extent; and their difficulties and dangers are reduced even more than that. All the advantages of long rivers, such as variety of soil, climate, productions, remain divested of all the disadvantages of distance and difficulty of ascent. The day that commemorates this invention, should be a holiday of interest, only second to that which gave birth to the nation.

It is, perhaps, necessary to have something of the experience, which we have had, of the slowness, difficulty and danger of propelling boats against the current of these long rivers, fully to estimate the advantages of this invention.— We have ascended the Mississippi in this way for fifty days in succession. We have had but too much of the same kind of experience on the other streams. We consider ten miles a day as good progress. It is now refreshing, and it imparts a feeling of energy and power to the beholder, to see the large and beautiful steamboats scudding up the eddies, as though on the wing. When they have run out the eddy, and strike

the current, it is a still more noble spectacle. The foam bursts in a sheet quite over the deck. The boat quivers for a moment with the concussion; and then, as though she had collected energy, and vanquished her enemy, she resumes her stately march, and mounts against the current five or six miles an hour. We have travelled ten days together between New Orleans and Louisville, more than an hundred miles in a day against the stream. The difficulty of ascending used to be the only one that was dreaded in the anticipation of a voyage of this kind. This difficulty has now disappeared, and the only one that remains, is to furnish money for the trip. Even the expense, considering the luxury of the fare and accommodation, is more moderate than could be expected. A family in Pittsburg wishes to make a social visit to a kindred family on Red River. The trip, as matters now stand, is but two thousand miles. Servants, baggage, or "plunder," as the phrase is, the family and the family dog, cat and parrot, all go together. In twelve days they reach the point proposed. Even the return is but a short voyage. Surely we must resist strong temptations, if we do not become a social people. You are invited to a breakfast at seventy miles distance. You go on board the passing steamboat, and are transported, during the night, so as to go out in the morning and reach your appointment. The day will probably come, when the inhabitants of the warm and sickly regions of the lower points of the Mississippi will take their periodical migrations to the north, with the geese and swans, and with them return to the south in the autumn.

We have compared the most beautiful steamboats of the Atlantic waters with those of the Mississippi; and we have seen none, which, in splendor and striking effect upon the eye, and the luxury and comfort of accommodation, surpass the Western boats. We have been amused in observing an Atlantic stranger, who had heard us described by the phrase, "backwoods men," taking his first survey of such a steamboat. If there be any ground of complaint, it is, that so much gorgeousness offends good taste, and seems to be in opposition

to that social ease and comfort, which one would desire in such a place. Certainly, there can be no comparison between the comfort of the passage from Cincinnati to New Orleans in such a steamboat, and a voyage at sea. The barren and boundless expanse of waters soon tires upon every eye but a seaman's. And then there are storms, and the necessity of fastening the tables, and of holding to something, to keep in bed. There is the insupportable nausea of sea sickness, and there is danger. Here you are always near the shore, always see the green earth; can always eat, write, and study, undisturbed. You can always obtain cream, fowls, vegetables, fruit, fresh meat and wild game, in their season, from the shore.

A stranger to this mode of travelling would find it difficult to describe his impressions upon descending the Mississippi for the first time in one of these steamboats, which we have named. He contemplates the prodigious construction, with its double tiers of cabins, and its separate establishment for the ladies, and its commodious arrangements for the deck passengers and the servants. Over head, about him, and below him, all is life and movement. He contemplates the splendor of the cabin, its beautiful finishing of the richest woods, its rich carpeting, its mirrors and fine furniture, its sliding tables, its bar room, and all its arrangements for the accommodation of a hundred cabin passengers. The fare is sumptuous, and every thing in a style of splendor, order, and quiet, far exceeding most city taverns. You read, converse, walk, or sleep, as you choose. You are not burdened by the restraint of useless ceremony. The varied and verdant scenery shifts about you. The trees, the green islands, the houses on the shore, every thing has an appearance, as by enchantment, of moving past you. The river fowl, with their white and extended lines, are wheeling their flight above you. The sky is bright. The river is dotted with boats above, beside, and below you. You hear the echo of their bugle reverberating from the woods. Behind the wooded point, you see the ascending column of smoke rising over the trees, which announ-

ces that another steamboat is approaching you. The moving pageant glides through a narrow passage, between an island, thick set with young cotton woods, so even, so beautiful and regular, that they seem to have been planted for a pleasure ground, and the main shore. As you shoot out again into the broad stream, you come in view of a plantation, with all its busy and cheerful accompaniments. At other times, you are sweeping along for many leagues together, where either shore is a boundless and pathless wilderness. A contrast is thus strongly forced upon the mind, of the highest improvement and the latest preëminent invention of art with the most lonely aspect of a grand, but desolate nature,—the most striking and complete assemblage of splendor and comfort, the cheerfulness of a floating hotel, which carries, perhaps, hundreds of guests, with a wild and uninhabited forest, it may be an hundred miles in width, the abode only of bears, owls, and noxious animals.

TRIBUTE TO NATIVE TALENT.

[FROM THE BOSTON EVENING GAZETTE, APRIL, 1847.]



A very interesting meeting occurred last Monday evening, at Banvard's Panorama, in Amory Hall. His Excellency Gov. Briggs was present with a large number of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, and other high officers of State, together with a large and fashionable audience of ladies and gentlemen. After the picture had passed, the Hon. Wm. Bradbury, Speaker of the House of Representatives, arose, and with some appropriate remarks, moved that the spectators would resolve them in a regular meeting and give an expression of opinion regarding the great merit of the painting. The Hon. Mr. B. then moved that his Excellency Gov. Briggs, of Massachusetts, should take the chair, which motion was received unanimously by acclamation. Gov. Briggs accordingly appeared upon the floor.

As the Governor left the seat which he occupied to take the chair, he was greeted with a hearty round of applause, expressive of his popularity with the audience, and of their approbation of the object of the meeting.

Upon taking the chair, his Excellency remarked, that there seemed to be a propriety, and for one he should most cheer-

fully do it, to give an expression of their pleasure and admiration at the wonderful and extraordinary production which had just passed before them, and of their high appreciation of the talents of the young artist. He said that he was informed by Mr. Banvard, that the idea of this Panorama first entered his mind, when a fatherless, unprotected boy, fifteen years old, he was floating for the first time down the rapid current of this noble river. He was stimulated in the prosecution of his original and herculean task, by seeing it stated in some foreign journal, that in this country there were some of the most picturesque and magnificent scenes in the world, but that America had no artist adequate to the task of giving a correct and faithful representation of them. Mr. B. resolved upon an effort, by which the talent of his country should be redeemed from this aspersion, and by which the world should know that American genius was competent to give an appropriate and beautiful representation of American scenes. Successfully and nobly has he accomplished his work. After the idea of this enterprise entered his mind, it followed him by day and haunted him by night for months and years, until it developed itself in the wonderful and magnificent production which we have witnessed this evening. More than four hundred days was this young man floating alone in an open skiff upon the bosom of this majestic stream, gliding among its romantic islands or wandering upon its beautiful shores, making his drawings of the towns, cities, banks and bluffs, which, as if by enchantment, have just passed before our astonished gaze, in all the correctness of their proportions and beauty of coloring. It should be to us an interesting fact, that this vast and splendid work of art is the production of a young, unencouraged, self-made, self-taught artist. He was born in the city of New York, and as

they say at the West, raised in Kentucky. After Mr. B. had resolved upon this great work he was penniless, he had therefore to raise funds to purchase materials. He accordingly went up and down the great Father of Waters several times, trading, boating, &c., until he acquired a few thousand dollars. With this he erected a house in which to paint, purchased canvas, colors, brushes and all necessary articles, and went to work.

The fame, continued the Governor, of this vast and beautiful panorama of the noble Mississippi will continue, and the genius and enterprise of the author be honored so long as the great Father of Waters and its numerous tributaries continued to pour their tides into the great ocean. As it is a truly national work he thought there was a propriety in giving an expression of the high estimate of it as an extraordinary work of art, and of their appreciation of the talents of the artist.

After the Governor had taken his seat, the Hon. Mr. Calhoun, President of the Senate, arose, and offered the following Resolutions:—

Resolved, That we regard the Panorama of the Mississippi River, painted by Mr. John Banvard, as a truly wonderful and magnificent production; and we deem it but a just appreciation of its extraordinary merit to express our high admiration of the boldness and originality of the conception, and of the industry and indefatigable perseverance of the young and talented artist, in the execution of his herculean work.

Resolved, That the immense extent of this picture, its truthfulness to Nature, as certified by those who are familiar with the river; its minuteness of detail; the wonderful illusion of its perspective; the great variety of its scenery and objects

render it a useful medium for imparting correct information, respecting an interesting portion of our beautiful country.

Resolved, That as Americans, it is with emotions of pride and pleasure we commend this splendid painting, and its talented artist, who, by its production, has reflected so much honor upon himself, and upon the country of his birth, to the favorable consideration of the admirers of the fine arts, and of all others, who, under the influence of a commendable patriotism, cherish a disposition to encourage native genius and enterprise.

At the close of Mr. Calhoun's remarks, Mr. Bradbury arose again, and after making some prefatory remarks, said, that the illustrious Fulton, the inventor of the steam engine, by which invention this most magnificent of all rivers had been available to the inhabitants of the vast valley, and back country, through which it flowed, and to the world, first went to England as an ARTIST; while there, seeing the various philosophical modes by which machinery was applied for the purpose of saving labor, he was led to abandon his profession, and conceived the idea of applying steam power for locomotives.

Having wished Mr. Banvard a favorable reception in Europe, when he should visit it, which it was understood he intended soon to do, he finished his remarks by moving the adoption of the Resolutions.

The question being put, it was UNANIMOUSLY decided in the affirmative. The audience then returned to their homes, highly gratified with their truly rational and intellectual entertainment.

TESTIMONIALS.

The undersigned has been navigating the Mississippi river for thirty years, and am as well acquainted with it, as I am with the deck of the boat I command; and having twice examined Mr. Banvard's great Painting of the Mississippi river, take great pleasure in testifying to its truthfulness and correctness to nature.

JOHN SHALCROSS,

MASTER OF STEAMER PEYTONA.

New Orleans, Nov. 20, 1846.

This is to certify that I have examined Mr. Banvard's Painting of the Mississippi river, and having been engaged for a number of years in the employ of Government, raising snags and removing other obstructions, am well acquainted with the river, and unhesitatingly pronounce Mr. Banvard's Painting remarkably correct and faithful to nature.

J. MOREHEAD,

U. S. ENGINEER.

Louisville, Nov. 8, 1846.

KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ROOM, }
Oct. 31, 1846. }

JOHN BANVARD, ESQ.,

Dear Sir,—Having enjoyed much pleasure in company with the majority of the members of this Society in viewing your magnificent Panorama, I beg leave to tender this voluntary testimonial of my gratification. Having frequently travelled the Mississippi river, I am much acquainted with the grandeur and magnificence of the scenery which you have

portrayed in your stupendous work with a correctness I have never seen equalled.

At the next regular meeting of the Kentucky Historical Society, you will be awarded its diploma for the fidelity of your Painting. Yours truly,

TAL. P. SHAFNER,

SEC. KY. HIS. SOC.



We the undersigned, being officers of steamboats continually plying on the Mississippi river, have examined Mr. Banvard's great Painting, and take great pleasure in recommending it for its fidelity and truthfulness to nature, and giving a correct delineation of the scenery and peculiar characteristics of this mighty river.

J. JOINER,	Captain.	B. SMITH,	Pilot.
DANIEL DASHIEL,	"	HENRY E. LEE,	"
C. S. CASTLEMAN,	"	N. OSTRANDER,	"
T. COLEMAN,	"	ALEX. BADGER,	"
JAC. DILLON,	"	JOHN CRAWFORD,	"
SAMUEL PENNINGTON,	"	JAS. D. HAMILTON,	"
ELI T. DUSTIN,	"	D. S. HALEY,	"
ROBERT BROWN,	"	JAMES O'NEAL,	"
THOMAS NORTHUP,	"	ELI VANSICKLE,	"
R. DE HART,	"	ALLEN PELL,	"

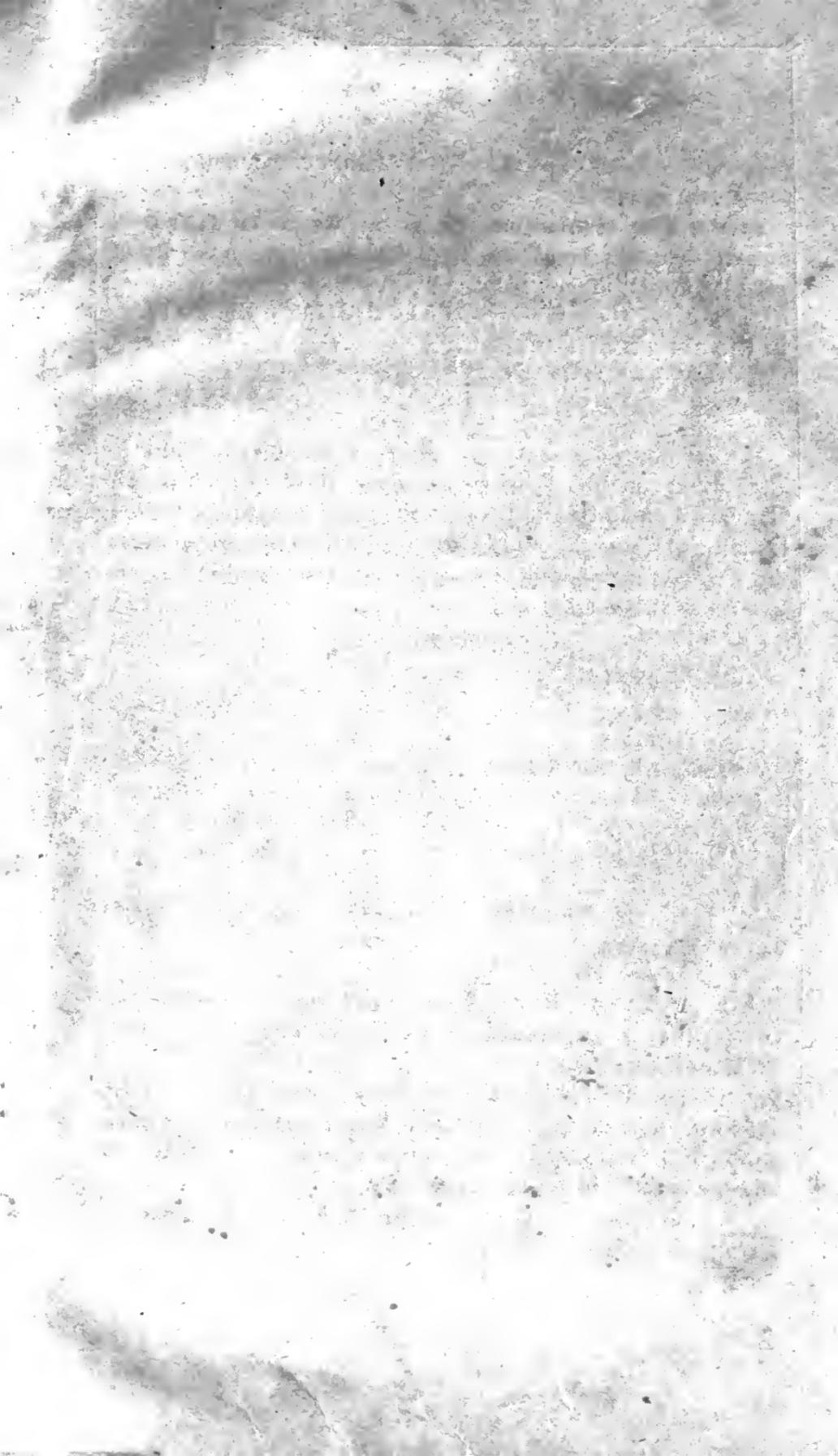
Over one hundred more names omitted for want of room.

STATE of KENTUCKY, }
 City of Louisville. } ss.

I, F. A. KAYE, Mayor of the city of Louisville, do hereby certify, that I am personally acquainted with nearly all of the gentlemen who have certified to the correctness of the great Panorama of the Mississippi river, painted by Mr. John Banvard; and certify further, that they are all practical navigators of the Mississippi river, and are gentlemen of veracity, and are entitled to full credit as such.

FRED. A. KAYE, MAYOR.





Opinions of the Press.

The painting,—its wild beginning, its difficult progress, and final triumphant completion, stands alone in the annals of the art, as a marvellous monument of the patience, daring ambition, and genius of American character.—*Boston Herald*.

A masterpiece, both in design and execution; it is an honor alike to the persevering artist, and the country of his birth.—*Boston Post*.

Language cannot exaggerate the comparative merits of this great work of art. It needs only to be seen to satisfy that it cannot be fully appreciated.—*Boston Olive Branch*.

It is from the beginning to the end, one of the most living, charming things, that ever came from the hands of man.—*Boston Atlas*.

In magnitude and grandeur this painting has no equal on the face of the globe.—*Boston Times*.

This painting now stands the greatest and proudest work of art in the world.—*Louisville Courier*.

We can only say that too much cannot be said in praise of this wonderful picture; and all the praise it receives is justly deserved.—*Louisville Journal*.



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DESCRIPTION OF BANVARD'S PANORAMA OF THE



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