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DESCRIPTION

OF

BANVARD'S PANORAMA

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI & MISSOURI RIVERS,

EXTENSIVELY KNOWN AS THE

"THREE-MILE PAINTING,"

EXHIBITING A VIEW OF COUNTRY OVER

3000 MILES IN LENGTH,

EXTENDING FROM THE

MOUTH OF THE YELLOW STONE TO THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS,

BEING BY FAR

The Largest Picture

EVER EXECUTED BY MAN.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY W. J. GOLBOURN,
6, PRINCES STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

1848.

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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 compiled from Howitt's Journal, London; Chambers' Edinburgh Journal; and Morris & Willis' Home Journal, New York.]

THE day was bright, and the setting sun was casting its mellow light over the ever beautiful autumnal foliage of an American landscape, bordering on the noble Mississippi. A tiny skiff was floating upon the mirror'd surface of the stream, unguided by its solitary occupant, a boy, of scarce sixteen, who sat, with folded arms, contemplating with wonder and delight, the glowing scenes around him. That boy was JOHN BANVARD. He had heard, and now realized, that America could boast the most picturesque and magnificent scenery in the world; and as he glided along by the beautiful shores, the boy resolved within himself to be an Artist, that he might paint the beauties and sublimities of his native land.

Some years passed away, and still this fatherless, moneyless youth, dreamed of being a painter. What he was in his waking, working moments, we do not know; but, at all events, he found time to turn over and over again the great thought that haunted him, till at length, ere he had attained the age of manhood, it assumed a distinct and tangible shape in his mind, and he devoted himself to its realization. There mingled no idea of profit with his ambition, and indeed, strange to say, we can learn nothing of any aspirations he may have felt after artistical excellence. His grand object, as he himself informs us, was to produce *the largest painting in the world.* He determined to paint a picture of the beautiful scenery of the Mississippi, which should be as superior to all others, in point of *size*, as that prodigious river is superior to the

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streamlets of Europe,—a gigantic idea! which seems truly kindred to the illimitable forests and vast extent of his native land.

We will now say something of his eventful and romantic life, which, with its hardships, disappointments, and privations, had fitted him for the accomplishment of his herculean undertaking. He was born in the city of New York, where he received a good education, and is descended from an old French family. His grandfather was driven out of France by the bloody sword of persecution during one of the revolutions of the country, and fled to Amsterdam, in Holland. From thence he sailed to America, bringing with him little else but the heraldic honors of his family, for the Bon Verds (corrupted by the *patois* of the country to Banvard) were of highly respectable lineage. The coat of arms patented the family by the government, with the large antique silver seal, is now in possession of the Rev. Joseph Banvard, brother to John, pastor of the Harvard Street Church, Boston. Our hero showed the bent of his genius at a very early age. Being of delicate health in childhood, he was unable to enjoy the active, out-door sports of other boys, and, accordingly, he amused himself by drawing and painting, for which he exhibited decided talents, by becoming quite an accomplished draughtsman while yet a mere lad.

While his more favoured 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, not spending them in toys or sweetmeats, as most youths would, and bought some types for a wooden printing press, of his own construction, and printed some handbills for his juvenile exhibitions. We have one of

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them now in our possession, and it is quite a genteel specimen of typography. The child was truly the father of the man in this, as in so many other cases, but he had much to pass through before the promise of the boy could be developed in the accomplishments of the man, as the sequel will show.

Young Banvard was intimate with Woodworth, the poet, the author of the "Old Oaken Bucket," whose family were neighbours 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 when he was about nine years of age. He has continued 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 favourite 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

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about sixteen years old. Our hero, nothing daunted, by persevering labour 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 observed 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, 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

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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 laboured 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 being more comfortable than the hard plank of the boat, his head burning with the fever and his limbs racked 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

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feasted voraciously on them, except Banvard, who was too sick to eat anything, and who lay upon one of the benches, burniug 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 "exhibited" 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 exhibiting their paintings, they had a luxurious supper. Fasting so long, appeared to have done Banvard some good, for it starved the fever out of him; he found, as we often do, that adversity ha. its blessings, 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

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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 potatoes, 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 the stream with the unconscious spectators, who were landed in a thick cane brake, about two miles below. 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, he engaged in painting at New Orleans, Natchez,

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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. He finally lost this painting by the sinking of a steamer, upon which it was being transported to the city of Nashville. Having accumulated, by his art, a little capital, we next find him at St. Louis, as the proprietor of the St. Louis museum, which he had purchased. 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, for which he had given twelve dollars in St. Louis, for twenty-five dollars. With this capital he bought a larger boat, got some produce aboard, which he retailed 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, several thousand dollars. With the capital thus accumulated, he commenced his grand project of painting the Panorama of the Mississippi.

For this purpose, 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 labour 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. The idea of gain never entered his mind when he commenced the undertaking, but he was actuated by a patriotic and honourable ambition, that he should produce the *largest painting* in the world.

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One of the greatest difficulties he encountered, was the preparatory labour 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 tawny 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 conch, 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

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place. The sun the while was so intensely hot, that his skin became so burned, 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 S. Woodworth, an officer of the United States navy, who passed through Louisville, bearer of despatches to Oregon and California, to his friend, General Morris, at New York, and published in the "Home Journal" 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, palette and pencil

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in hand, came to the door to admit us. He did not at first recognise me, but when I mentioned my name, he dropped both palette 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 labour, 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 strewed 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 completed his painting he thus disposed 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 the 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

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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 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 were the impressions produced by our slight and unfavourable 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 adorned 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."

Banvard was a self-taught artist—no—he had a teacher. He went not to Rome indeed, to study the works of hands long since passed away; but he studied the omnipresent works of the One Great Living Master!—Nature was his teacher. Many a time, at the close of a lovely summer's day, after

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finishing his solitary evening meal, would he sit upon some lonely rock, near the margin of the noble river, where all was still, save the sweet chaunt of the feathered songsters of the adjacent forest, or the musical ripple of the eddying waters at his feet, and watch the majestic bluff as it gradually faded through the gray twilight from the face of day into the darker shades of night. Then would he turn and study the rising moon, as it peered above the opposite shore, ascending the deep blue ether, high in the heavens above, casting its mellow light over the surrounding landscape, and gilding the smooth surface of the river with its silvery hue. It was then and there he studied nature in its lonely grandeur, and seized those glowing moonlight scenes which now adorn his canvas, so vividly too, as if painted with a pencil dipped in the silvery beams of the living moon itself.

During the time this undaunted young man was transferring his drawings to the canvas, he had to practice the most rigid economy, lest his money should give out before the picture was completed. He could not afford to hire a menial assistant to do the ordinary labour about his paint-room; and when the light of the day would recede from the canvas, upon which he was at work, instead of taking relaxation when the night came, he would be found grinding his colours, or splitting his wood for the ensuing day. Still, with all these self-denials and privations, his last cent was expended long before his last sketch was transferred to his last piece of canvas. He then endeavoured to get credit for a few pieces of this material, from a merchant of whom he had purchased the principal part for his painting, and with whom he had expended hundreds of dollars while speculating on the river, but in vain. Still, not discouraged, he laid his favourite project aside for a time, and sought other work. Fortunately, he obtained a small job to decorate regalia for a lodge of Odd Fellows, and with a light heart went cheerfully to work, to earn the money which would purchase the material to complete his picture. With the avails, he procured the needed canvas.

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At last, his great project is finished! the Mississippi is painted! and his country now boasts the largest painting in the world! But the trials of our persevering artist were not all passed. The history of the first exhibition of this wonderful production is curious, and furnishes another illustration of the necessity there is, never to despair. The gas company of Louisville, before they would put up fixtures for him, compelled him to deposit *double* the price 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, as they desired the apparatus very much, it being worth twice the amount they gave for the tickets. The city authorities also ordered him to pay a tax for exhibiting his work,—a work of which they ought to have been proud, and which would not only reflect honour upon the city, but make it noted throughout the civilised world.

The first night he opened his great picture for exhibition, in Louisville, not a single person thought it worth while to visit it. He received not a cent,—the night was rainy. The artist returned to his room with a sorrowful heart,—he sat down upon a box, and looked upon the blank wall, where, but a few days before, with high spirits and cheerful heart, he had put the finishing touch to his task of long years of toil and hope. His heart almost sank within him; but he did not despair. The next day he sallied out among the boatmen, by the river, and gave them tickets; telling them they must see it; that it was their river he had painted. At night the boatmen came, and with them a few of their friends. When they saw the accuracy of the painting, they were delighted, and their wild enthusiasm was raised as one well known object after another passed by them. The boatmen told the citizens it was a grand affair; that it was correctly delineated, and its accuracy could be relied upon. Finally, the public became convinced that the picture was really worth looking at, and then they rushed to see it by crowds.

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The great artist left the city and went to New York and Boston, where his beautiful painting was duly appreciated. Admiring thousands upon thousands visited it,—many coming hundreds of miles, from the remotest parts of the States, to view this wonderful production. Indeed, so great was the desire to see it, that the railroad companies run express trains from adjacent towns into the cities for the accommodation of the eager throngs who wished to view the greatest achievement of individual enterprise upon record. And in these cities our persevering young artist reaped the reward for his years of toil, for the public fully appreciated his great work. The fame of the artist is his country's property. "His genius and enterprise will be honoured," as Governor Briggs beautifully remarked, "so long as the great Father of Waters, and its numerous tributaries, continue to pour their flowing tides into the great ocean."

THE RIVERS.

Mississippi! Father of Waters: a fitting name for such a noble river. The untutored Indian who named it thus, realised its majesty and grandeur, for it certainly *is* the "father" of all rivers, being the largest upon the globe. From its source, in the rocky mountains, following its meanders by the Missouri, until it empties in the Gulf of Mexico, is a distance of nearly five thousand miles.

The Missouri is named as a tributary; but it is considered, by all observing persons who have travelled through the country, and studied its features, to be the parent stream. This is my own opinion. The distinctive features suddenly change at the junction of the two, the character of the 'lower' river continuing with the Missouri, and thus I have painted it.

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The Missouri rises in the rocky mountains nearly in the same latitude with the source of the Mississippi, about 44° N. It is formed by three respectable sized streams, which the celebrated travellers, Messrs. Laws and Clark, named respectively Jefferson, Gallatin, and Madison, in compliment to these distinguished American statesmen. On the opposite side of the same range of mountains, the Columbia, which empties into the Pacific, has its origin, and it requires but a few minutes walk to drink from the spring source of each of these great rivers, which empty their waters, by different channels, into separate oceans, thousands of miles apart. At first, the river is a furious mountain torrent, leaping in wildness from rock to rock, through deep gorges and dark ravines, rendered still darker by being overshadowed by the almost impervious foliage of terebenthines, firs, pines, and cedars. Then it spreads into a gentle rivulet, with its rippled waters sparkling in the light of mid-day sun, rejoicing, as it were, in its escape from the rocky embrace of the mountain gorge. Soon it spreads out into a peaceful and gentle stream, with its bosom dotted with romantic and beautiful islands, all covered with the richest foliage, and matted with flowering vines. These, again, overshadowed by lofty peaks of perpendicular rocks, raising their heads to the height of a thousand feet. Among their abrupt terraces, and over their steep precipices, may be seen bounding, in their native wildness, the rocky mountain sheep and nimble antelope.

As it thus glides along, stream after stream enter on either side, contributing their waters to swell its advancing march, until it becomes a large and flowing river. Steep bluffs, of many coloured clays and fantastic shape, range along the shores, some falling perpendicular into the water, others receding back from the river, leaving a strip of the richest soil intervening, which nourishes a luxuriant growth of willow and cotton wood, whose varied foliage stand out in strong relief against the light clay bluffs beyond.

The scenery in these remote regions has an aspect of

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majestic grandeur rarely witnessed upon the globe, perfectly unique in its kind. These bluffs assume a great variety of fanciful shapes, some resembling the ruins of ancient cities, with their domes, towers, and castellated walls, as if nature, in a playful mood, was mimicking the works of man. Beautiful prairies stretch off from the elevated shores, like a sea of verdure, until they meet the horizon. Myriads of wild flowers, of every size and hue, are intermingled with the luxuriant grass, "wasting their fragrance on the desert air." Smooth grassy hills at intervals roll, with graceful and uniform shapes, down to the river's edge, relieving the eye, by their graceful curves, from the angular and abrupt forms of the more majestic bluffs above. As it approaches the Mississippi, it is bounded by dark forests and heavily timbered shores, with the banks jagged and broken. Openings in the trees, and the sound of the axe echoing through the woods, betoken the appearance of civilization. The rude cabin of the settler, with the smoke curling from its chimney, indicates that you have passed the wild region of the savage, and are now among the abodes of white men. Such is the character of the Missouri, from its source in the rocky mountains, till it discharges its waters into the channel of the Mississippi.

We will now describe the other branch, or the "Upper Mississippi," as it is called.—This rises in the same parallel, among wild rice lakes, but it flows only a short distance when it becomes a large stream, moving with a very slow current 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 limestone 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. Thence it rolls its

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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 civilised 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 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. A very 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 vigour and grandeur of vegetation, which contribute much to the magnificence of the river. The sand bars, in the proper season, are the resort of

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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 masses 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

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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 often 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 limestone 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 civilised inhabitant on its shores, if we except the establishment of Indian traders, and a garrison of the United States.

Between the mouth of the Ohio and St. Louis, on the west

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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 limestone; 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.

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 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 or three years; and trees rising in regular gradation to the most ancient and lofty point of the

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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.

Regarding the scenery of the country, it is strikingly grand and beautiful, such as an artist would seize upon for his pencil. At times, graceful high lands can be seen curving away in the dim distance, with their summits scarcely above the horizon, bounded by a prairie of the richest green; at other times, immense grassy plains, without a single tree to break the vision, extend as far as the eye can reach: again, abrupt cliffs, of fantastic forms, and steep precipices, boom aloft, and their irregular forms relieve again the blue heavens above. The atmosphere is clear, the skies the bluest of the blue, and, when decked with fleecy clouds, are rich and gorgeous beyond description, vieing in splendor with the far famed skies of sunny Italy.

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THE PANORAMA.

Mr. BANVARD *does not exhibit this Painting as a* WORK OF ART, *but as a correct representation of the Country it portrays, and its high reputation at home is based upon its remarkable accuracy, and truthfulness to nature.*

YELLOW STONE BLUFFS*

Of the Missouri.—View looking several miles up the river. The Missouri river, although it is called a tributary to the Mississippi, is considered by many to be the main stream, and strictly speaking it is. The upper Mississippi should have been called the Missouri, for it is much shorter, and brings down less water in the main channel than the latter stream.

ASSINNABOIN'S BAR—

Dividing the river at the base of a lofty precipice.

THE DOMES.

Here we have some of the most unique scenery probably in the world. Large clay bluffs, of different coloured clays, rear their heads towards the heavens, the tops are washed away by the rains into circular forms, so that at a distance they resemble immense domes of some gigantic city.

GRAND DÉTOUR.

Here the river makes a very large circuit, and the spectator, instead of following the river round, is carried across the Isthmus.

INDIAN ENCAMPMENT—

And the Sioux, dancing their war dance upon the

GRASSY PLAINS,

Which stretch far away in the distance.

INDIANS HUNTING BUFFALOES.

Large numbers of these animals are taken yearly, merely for their hides, which the Indians sell to the white traders.

* As the painting alternately ascends and descends, it will be necessary for the reader, when ascending, to commence at the end of this description, and follow it back to the beginning.

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VILLAGE OF THE DEAD,

Or an aboriginal cemetery. Here will be seen the curious manner the Indians dispose of their dead.

GRAND PRAIRIE—

With its tall waving grass, and myriads of wild flowers—one of the most beautiful sights in nature.

PRAIRIE ON FIRE—

Burning away in the distance, as far as the eye can reach.

INDIAN VILLAGE, (by Moonlight),

And the return of the Grand Détour.

KNIFE RIVER,

And the Square Hills. In the fore-ground is Mr. Banvard, seated upon a log, with his rifle by him, and his little skiff moored by the bank of the stream. Upon the gum tree, near him, will be seen one of the gorgeous tints of American foliage.

INDIAN RUINS.

A deserted village of the Mandans, an extinct tribe.

TETON ISLANDS—

And the steamer General Taylor.

BRICK KILNS.

These are some very peculiar cliffs, of different coloured clays, but principally red, which give them the name. The rains are washing them down in many fanciful shapes, not unlike the stalactites of a subterranean cavern.

RUSH ISLAND,

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

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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 banks of the river; they have a wild, romantic appearance, some of them shooting 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 POUCHE, (or, in English, Empty Pocket)

And a log cabin in the foreground. Here may be noticed the rich and varied hues of the American foliage. I have seen several different colours upon the same tree. During the end of the summer months and the beginning of autumn the leafing is gorgeous. The trees are clothed in the deepest crimson, contrasted with the brightest yellow, or orange, and strongly relieved by the undying green of the terebenthines. A certain writer terms it *rainbow* foliage.

UNITED STATES ARSENAL.

It is beautifully situated on a gentle declivity, immediately below the city, at the foot of "the bar." A short distance

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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. 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 harbour. Miners, trappers, hunters, adventurers, emigrants, and people of all character and languages, meet here, and disperse, 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 the 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 green sward, while their squaws are preparing their rude repast.

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Below the junction of the Missouri stands 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 Rivère." 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,

Which, like New Orleans, is protected by levees, raised above the highest known floods; from thence, to the Gulf of Mexico, the navigation is always open for steamers of the largest class. Above this point, the Ohio and Mississippi, in winter, are often closed by ice, and in summer, impeded by low water. Hence the importance of the Central Railroad, commenced from this place by the State, to connect with the Illinois and Michigan Canal, Galena and Chicago, upon which was expended a million of dollars; and, whenever completed, will form the most direct, speedy, and certain route, at all seasons, between the South-western and Northern States. Cairo, from its geographical position, and the immense range of navigable rivers, all centering at this point, is destined to become one of the largest inland cities in the United States.

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

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on the river, commanded by Captain 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, 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 the 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

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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 Murell, 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 in 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 Number Thirty-Four.

MEMPHIS.

This city is beautifully situated on the Fourth Chickasaw Bluffs, presenting a very fine appearance as you descend the river.

FORT PICKERING,

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

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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 also 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 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.

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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 Zachary 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 numbers 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. 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

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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 Wontongo, 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 descending the river.

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, groupes of negro quarters, lofty churches, splendid villas, presenting, in all, one of the finest

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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° 57' and 13° 9' west from Washington, 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 harbour 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 craft of every description, that have floated from all points of the valley above, line 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 wharfs, 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 colouring of the brilliant sun and sky of the climate, present a splendid spectacle.

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LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

THE greater part of the commercial intercourse of the country with New Orleans, is 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 steamboats, 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 one hundred feet in length. The timbers of the bottom are massive beams, which 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

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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 steamboats, 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, 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; it is, of course, a work of extreme labour to get the boat afloat again. Its form and 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 so strong a current, is a matter of no little difficulty and danger.

All the toil, danger, exposure, and moving incidents 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 labour. 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. Greetings, rude defiances, trials of wit, 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 disappears behind the point of wood. At this moment, perhaps, the bugle, with which all the boats are provided, strikes up its

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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 labours 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 labours 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 steamboats, 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 sooner 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, 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 excelient point of observation, from which to contemplate their aspect, the character of boating, 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

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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 a 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 ladings, the evidence of the increasing agriculture above, and, more than all, the immense distances which they have already traversed, afford a copious fund for meditation. In one place there are boats laden 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, bale rope, and 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 laden with furniture, tools, and domestic and agricultural implements; in short, the numerous products of the ingenuity, speculation, manufacture, and agricultnre 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

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horses trample, as in their stables; the swine utter the cries of fighting with each other; the turkeys gobble; the dogs of a 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, trampling of cattle, barking of dogs, and crowing of 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 goodwill. 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, unlash, and each one manages his boat in his own way.

The order of things in the western country, naturally fosters a propensity for a floating life on the water. The inhabitants will, ultimately, become as famous as the Chinese, for

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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 book store, is no uncommon establishment. We have seen a large floating blacksmith's establishment; and another, in which it was contemplated to work a trip hammer. Floating museums and theatres land at the various towns and cities, to amuse the inhabitants: some of them are propelled by steam. Besides the numerous periogues, or singular looking Spanish and French trading retail boats, commonly called "chicken thieves," which scour the rivers within a 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 habited 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

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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, rowing, 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 juxta position. 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, and productions, remain divested of all the advantages 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.

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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 ten or twelve miles an hour. We have travelled ten days together, between New Orleans and Louisville, more than one 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 voyaye 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 eight 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.

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, its separate establishment for the ladies, and its commodious arrangements for the deck passengers and servants. Over head, about him and below him, all is life and movement. He contemplates the splendor

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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 two 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, green islands, and 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 announces 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 on 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 preeminent 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 a hundred miles in width, the abode only of bears, owls, and noxious animals.

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Copy of Resolutions offered by the Hon. Mr. CALHOUN, *and which were* UNANIMOUSLY *adopted by the Senate and House of Representatives at the city of Boston, United States of America.*

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, and 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 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 honour upon himself, and upon the country of his birth, to the favourable consideration of the admirers of the fine arts, and of all others, who cherish a disposition to encourage genius and enterprise.

GEO. N. BRIGGS,
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

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TESTIMONIALS.

Letter from the Hon. EDWARD EVERETT, *late American Minister to the Court of St. James, to* Sir RODERIC J. MURCHISON, *of the Royal Geographical Society.*

CAMBRIDGE, *Sept.* 11, 1848.

DEAR SIR,

I have thought that the Royal Geographical Society might take some interest in a PANORAMA OF THE MISSISSIPPI. Strange as it may sound, Mr. Banvard has executed a painting of the whole course of that river, from original drawings, most laboriously executed upon the spot. He is the first projector of the enormous paintings of this clasa, which are now rapidly multiplying, and which, if executed with fidelity, like his, will have a scientific interest for the geographer. It is spoken of in terms of the highest commendation by good judges, and it has been most favourably received by the public. Mr. Banvard, I regret to hear, has been anticipated in Europe, by a party of speculators, who have tried to make a surreptitious copy of his painting; but I should hope that the superior merit of the original work will be readily perceived by all persons of intelligence in London,

I remain, dear Sir R.,
With the kindest regards,
Very faithfully yours,
(Signed) EDWARD EVERETT.

SIR RODERIC J. MURCHISON,
&c. &c. &c.

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

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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,

Louisville, Nov. 8, 1846. U. S. ENGINEER.

We, the undersigned, being officers of steamboats continually plying on the Mississippi river, have examined Mr. Banvard's great Painting, and take much 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,	„
SAM. PENNINGTON,	„	JAS. D. HAMILTON,	„
ELI T. DUSTIN,	„	D. S. HALEY,	„
ROBERT BROWN,	„	JAMES O'NEAL,	„
THOMAS NORTHUP,	„	ELI VANSICKLE,	„
R. DE HART,	„	ALLEN PEEL,	„

Over one hundred more names omitted for want of room.

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

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, are gentlemen of veracity, and entitled to full credit as such.

L. S.

FRED. A. KAYE, MAYOR.

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Mr. Banvard is the sole author of the great Panorama of the Mississippi River, which I have seen in common with tens of thousands of our citizens, and it is universally deemed a perfect representation of that wonderful river and its banks. I take great pleasure in commending this exhibition of skill and industry to the public.

ABBOTT LAWRENCE.

Boston, Sept. 19, 1848.

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 SHALLCROSS,
MASTER OF STEAMER "PEYTONA."

New Orleans, Nov. 20, 1846.

Banvard's Panorama is one of the most stupendous, grand, and wonderful creations of man: it is impossible to convey by words even a faint conception of this great work of genius and art. One must *see* it, and then he has all that is grand, noble, beautiful, and sublime, impressed, in vivid colours upon the tablet of his mind, but what language can never describe to others.—*New York Mirror.*

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