

PUBLICATIONS

—OF—

THE MISSISSIPPI
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITED BY
FRANKLIN L. RILEY
Secretary



VOL. IX

OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY
1906

A
BRIEF HISTORY

of the
Mississippi Territory,
To which is prefixed,

A
Summary view of the Country
between the settlements on
Cumberland—River,
& the Territory.

By James Hall, A. M.

SALISBURY:

PRINTED BY FRANCIS COUPEE.

1801.

“Copy-Right According To Law.”

[NOTE.—The following reprint of the first history of the Mississippi Territory is based on a copy found in the Library of Congress. So far as is known to the editor of these *Publications* no other copy of the original edition of this valuable work is in existence. A typewritten copy, in the Department of Archives and History at Jackson, Miss., (which was used in this connection) is probably the only other copy of this rare history to be found in the State.—EDITOR.]

PREFACE.

In May 1800 a commission was transmitted to me by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, convened in Philadelphia directing me on a mission to the Mississippi Territory. The Synod of the Carolinas commissioned two other missionaries to accompany me on the tour.

We arrived at Nashville about the middle of the following November where we intended to take boating for the territory; but the extreme lowness of Cumberland river rendered our passage that way impracticable. We therefore proceeded on horseback by the way of Chickasaw nation.

We arrived at the territory on the first week of December, and left it on the third week of April.

As I* have been solicited by sundry persons to publish an account of my travels through that part of the Union, and having my own geographical curiosity highly gratified by travelling through such a vast tract of country, the history of which is little known; presuming that a brief view of the inter-jacent space between the settlements of Cumberland and the territory, together with a sketch of a history of that territory, would afford some gratification to my fellow citizens, the following pages are with deference submitted to the candor of the public, by their humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Iredell County, North Carolina, August 25th, 1801.

*The author is not unapprised of the refinements of modern criticism, on account of which a historian is apt to be branded with the appellation of an egotist, if he use the pronoun, I; yet this he is willing to risk rather than use so many circumlocutions as must otherwise occur in the following history.

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE COUNTRY FROM THE SETTLEMENTS ON
CUMBERLAND RIVER TO THE MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY.

After crossing Harper River, ten miles from Nashville, the land for a few miles is hilly, but the soil of a tolerable quality.

It then becomes level and barren, with scarcely any timber except post-oaks. Thus it continues for a distance of about 20 miles until the road falls upon Long Flat Creek, on which are bodies of good low grounds. This is a branch of Duck river, on which are very little low grounds at the place of crossing but the soil is good for the distance of five or six miles on each side, though much broken with hills.

The distance between Duck and Tennessee rivers is about 100 miles, in which distance excepting what has been mentioned, together with small strips of low grounds being along Swan and Buffalo rivers, and two or three other small streams, there is not a spot over which the road passes which would make an eligible farm until you reach the low grounds of Tennessee river. The country is generally hilly, and many of the hills are mountains in miniature. Many of them are covered with chestnut-oak, and other timber which show marks of sterility, and the surface abounds with white flint-gravel.*

A good ferry is kept on Tennessee, by Major George Colbert, a half white of the Chickasaw nation at the Mouth of Bear Creek, thirty (some say fifty) miles below the Mussel shoals. At that place is a body of excellent low ground on both sides of the river.

From the ferry until within a few miles of the Chickasaw towns the land, high and low, may be termed barren. Though it is cut by vast number of small water courses, which carry great quantities of low grounds, abounding with excellent oak timber; yet those appear rather poorer than the high land. The distance is about 90 miles. Within eight miles of Big Town, the principal town of the nation, the road passes over some flats of good hickory land.

*Should Congress adopt the report of their committee, respecting the claims of N. Carolina and the purchase should fall on that part within the limits of the flats of Tennessee, from the view I had of it, the one tenth, perhaps the one fiftieth, acre would not be worth the office-fees.

The open ground in and about the town is between three and four miles in diameter. It was once the residence of the whole nation; but the strength of the soil being exhausted, the greater part of the inhabitants have moved out and settled in other villages. They are still limited within small bounds, as they are a small nation.

A white man who lives among them informed me, that when they were invaded by the Creek Indians, a few years since, as soon as the action began in one of the towns, the inhabitants of all the others heard the guns, and came to the assistance of their brethren.

Big Town, from a transient view in passing thro' it, appears to consist of about 200 houses. Their dwelling houses are neat log cabbins. Besides these they have their hot houses which serve for a residence for their families in winter, who can there subsist on a small quantity of fuel.

They are of a cylindrical form for the height of seven feet—terminate in a flat, conical roof, and thatched with sedge grass from top to bottom. They have no opening except a door at the outward end of a narrow passage, a few feet in depth; and some of them have a small window at the opposite side.

Their corn houses are cock lofts, raised on posts, and under which they have their fire wood deposited in neat order.

They are exceedingly hospitable to travellers. On entering one of their houses, victuals cooked in their way are immediately offered, and they are not pleased if the guest does not partake.

Husbandry, and consequently civilization, is making considerable progress among that people and also among the other southern tribes. To this the Federal agents are much contributing by encouraging agriculture among the men, and spinning and weaving among the women. The culture of cotton is making considerable advances among them. Gins were erected or erecting last spring in all the three southern nations; and it is probable that in a few years the cotton trade will be considerable among them. Their soil and climate are both exceeding favourable for that article; besides, they may have a ready conveyance to the ocean by the southern rivers,

The northern missionary society have employed the Revd. Joseph Bullen as a missionary to the Chickasaw Indians, and an assistant, Mr. Ebenezer Rice. They have settled among them with their families. They seem to meet with some encouragement, as to the religious instruction of the Indians, as they profess to hear with much reverence *The Beloved Speech*, as they term the holy scriptures. Mr. Bullen told me, that one of the greatest obstacles which appeared in his way in effecting instrumentally a reformation in their morals, was, the abandoned lives of white men among them. He informed me, that not long before our conference he undertook to admonish an Indian of very considerable influence for taking a second wife while his first was living with him. He replied, "there is A.— B.— naming a white man, a great man; he has five wives, and why may I not have two?"

Some of the Chickasaws are men of considerable property, have a number of slaves and farm largely, particularly the Colberts, of whom there are five or six brothers, and the Wolf's Friend, a man of considerable influence in the nation.

From the Chickasaw towns to the upper end of the territory the road passes nearly on the ridge between Big Black, a branch of the Mississippi, on the right, and of Tom Bigbee and Pearl rivers on the left. Here are beautiful flats of hickory land. The contemplative traveller's mind is merely fatigued with the beautiful prospects which are exhibited to the eye—plain beyond plain, to which it can descry no limits, and soil of the first quality. This is more especially the case opposite to the Choctaw towns which we pass on our left.

The greatest inconveniency which attends that country is the scarcity of timber; scarcely any to be seen on the best land except short-bodied hickory and some black-jack; but the low grounds which are of an inferior quality abound with good timber.

It appears, however, that the deficiency of timber may, in some measure, be compensated by the permanency of ditches; for it is observable, that the hillocks thrown up by the roots of hurricane timber stand at an unusual height when the trunks of the trees are totally obliterated.

As the traveller approaches the territory the timber becomes heavier, the land more hilly and covered with cane, none of which is on the high land from the waters of Duck river until within a day's ride of the inhabitants of Big-Black, on which are the highest settlements in the territory, except a few families at the Walnut-Hills.

BOUNDARIES OF THE TERRITORY.

The present bounds of the territory, as purchased from the Indians, are as follows:

Beginning on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, where it is intersected by the thirty first degree of North latitude; thence along that parallel 60 miles, which divides it from West Florida on the South; thence a direct course between North and West until it strikes Yazoo river ten miles above its confluence with Mississippi; thence down those rivers to the beginning, including Adams county on the South, and Pickering county on the North.

Connected with those is Washington county on Tom-Bigbee which is separated from the above by a waste of Indian land, of more than 200 miles in breadth. Those three counties were purchased from the natives by the British, when in possession of the Floridas.

OF THE TIME OF ITS SETTLEMENT.

At what time the present territory was first inhabited by Europeans I could not exactly ascertain. It was first discovered in the year 1682 by M. de la Salle, who, after a tour from Canada to Illinois, proceeded down the Mississippi to the gulf of Mexico; and, erecting the French standard, took possession of the country in the name of Lewis la Grande. He then returned by the way of Canada to France; and having obtained a commission as Governor of all the inhabitants, whether French or Indians, from Illinois to the Gulf, sailed with a squadron of four ships from Rochelle in the year 1684.

Being a man of a haughty, imperious disposition, and trusting to his own knowledge of that part of the gulf into which

Mississippi falls he would not consult his naval officers, missed the mouth of the river; & proceeding to the westward fell into the bay of St. Bernard. Approaching too near the shore in quest of the river, one of his largest ships, in which was a great part of his provisions and military stores, was lost on a shoal. He then made an incursion with a party into the country, and was murdered, together with some of his principal officers, by his own men.

The historian, from whom this account is taken, says no more of that expedition, but occasionally mentions, that the officer, who succeeded Salle in the command, was conducted to the Mississippi by the Indians of that neighbourhood. It is probable, however, that a colony was planted there by the French about, or before, the end of that century. He gives no further account of the country until the time of

THE MASSACRE OF THE FRENCH.

This happened in the year 1728. *Sieur de Chepor*, who commanded at the post of Natchez, was an austere, avaricious man.

He had, for some time, cast his eye upon White Apple Village with a design to make it his own. It was situated on a beautiful, fertile plain, on Second Creek, twelve miles S. E. of Natchez, and is now the dwelling of Col. Anthony Hutchens.

The commandant ordered the village to be evacuated. The chief who inhabited it remonstrated, alledging that the bones of their ancestors were there deposited, &c. but no remonstrance could dissuade the commandant from his purpose; and he threatened them with inevitable destruction if they did not immediately evacuate the village.

The chief dissembled his resentment, and begged two moons until they would look out and prepare a new habitation; during which time he promised a tribute of skins, furs &c. as a compensation for the delay. He then sent messengers to all the neighbouring nations; a convention of chiefs was called, and a scheme concerted to extirpate at one stroke, all the French on the Mississippi from Natchez to the ocean; Natchez and its vicinity being then the highest French settlement below Illinois.

The time appointed for that purpose was the 28th of February, 1728, at 9 o'clock in the morning.

That no mistake should be made respecting the time, each chief prepared a bundle of rods, equal in number to the days that were to intervene.

Each of those bundles was committed to a priest and deposited in their respective temples. Each priest was to take out and destroy a rod every morning; and on the morning when only one rod remained the fatal blow was to be given.

The supreme monarch of that country, whom they termed *The Great Sun*, was the son of a royal female of great eminence among them, by a French man; royalty and nobility being both reckoned among them from the mother, whoever might be the father.

He was a youth of only eighteen years old, but his station admitted him as a member of the council. The chiefs kept their design a profound secret among themselves. To this the old empress, (for so she may be called, being the relict of the last preceding Great Sun) was not accustomed, being formerly admitted into their councils. She knew that messengers had been sent to other nations, that their chiefs had various meetings &c.

She was more anxious, as she suspected a design against the French, for whom she had a special regard. She pressed upon her son to discover to her the design, but in vain. On a certain day she invited him to walk with her to White Apple Village, and conducted him along a private path—sat down with him by the way, pressed, yea, adjured him by all the filial duties which a child owes to a parent,—the affection of a mother—by that nourishment he had drawn from her breast, &c. to disclose to her the secret; until, worn out by her importunity, he divulged to her the whole scheme.

She remonstrated against it, but without effect. Fearing to appear publicly against the design, she communicated it to some young Indian women with whom she knew the French were intimate and they to them. The Frenchmen mentioned it to the commandant; but he was so blinded by his avarice, and flushed by the wealth he was daily amassing; and being

confident of his power and influence over the Indians, that he arrested one of the officers and laid seven other Frenchmen in irons for raising a false alarm, because they communicated to him the information they had received.

When the old empress saw that she could not avert the impending blow, she had recourse to the following stratagem, to make it as light as possible. She found access secretly to the temple in the neighbourhood of Natchez, drew out and destroyed two of the rods, which would lead the nation at the Natchez to strike two days before the others, by which the other French settlements might be apprized of their danger, and act on the defensive.

When the fatal morning came, all were secure and unsuspecting. The Indians had the freest access and recess to and from the garrison and neighbourhood; and a sufficient number was appointed to carry the design into execution, both in the garrison, and at each house.

A few guns fired at the commandant's quarters was to be the signal. The carnage was immediately general, in which 2000 French of all ages and sexes were massacred without mercy. Only one Frenchman escaped, and the present inhabitants say he was so closely pursued, that he was forced to swim the Mississippi four times on horseback on the same day. Twenty five negroes escaped; but the greater part of them were wounded. Ninety women, and about the same number of negroes, together with one hundred and fifty children were made prisoners.

The other nations, particularly the Chactaws, not knowing why the Natchez struck before the time appointed, alledged that they intended exclusively to enrich themselves with the spoils, and joined with the French to chastise them. The Natchez returned the women and negroes.

While the French were collecting their forces, the Natchez erected a fortification a few miles up the Mississippi, in which the French and their allies attacked them. About 1000 of them were made prisoners; they were sent to New Orleans, and sold as slaves in the island of St. Domingo. The remainder, taking the advantage of a thunder storm, escaped to the Chickasaws, where they found an asylum.

REPOPULATION AND REVOLUTIONS.

From that time the country appears to have been destitute of inhabitants until it, together with the Floridas, was ceded by Spain to Britain, at the peace of 1763, after which time it was re-inhabited by a colony of British subjects.

In 1779 the present territory was conquered by the Spaniards, who attached it to the [i]r province of Louisiana. In 1781 an insurrection was made by the citizens, (said to be at the instigation of the British at Pensacola,) and the Spanish garrison at Natchez surrendered to them; but the Pensacola being, shortly after, taken by the Spaniards, the citizens were obliged to surrender, and cast themselves upon their mercy. Seven of the insurgents received sentence of death, but were pardoned by the Governor.

At the definitive treaty of 1783, Britain relinquished to Spain all her claim to the southern part of North America, lying East of the Mississippi and in 1796 Spain guaranteed to the United States all that tract of country lying on the same side, above the thirty-first degree of North latitude; yet the Spanish government still continued to be administered until the national boundary was established by commissioners appointed by the court of Spain and our Federal government. That tract of country, whose boundaries have been described above, was then formed into a Congressional government, in 1798, and is known by the name of "*The Mississippi Territory.*"

The late, and present, form of Government.

The ordinance of Congress for territorial Government provides, that Congress may appoint a Governor for three years, a secretary of state for four years, and three judges who may continue in office during good behaviour. The governor and judges shall have power to adopt such laws of the original states; as may appear to be adapted to the circumstances of the territory, provided those laws be approved by Congress, until the number of free male inhabitants, above the age of twenty one years amount to 5000; at which time they shall be at liberty to choose a legislature of their own.

The Governor is authorized to exercise supreme executive jurisdiction in the territory, to appoint and commission all magistrates and other civil officers, also all militia officers, except general officers, who are to be appointed and commissioned by Congress.

The judges have jurisdiction of all civil matters above the powers of the county courts, and of appeals from them, also in all criminal cases. This is the first grade of territorial government.

In the second grade, the ordinance provides, that when the number of free males, qualified as above, amounts to 5000, they may choose a representative for every 500, and so in proportion, until the number be twenty-five.

Those representatives, when convened, shall choose ten citizens, qualified as the ordinance directs, whose names shall be forwarded to Congress; and they are to appoint five of that number, who are to form the legislative council; and they, together with the representatives, shall form the legislature of the territory; but no bill shall pass into a law until it receive the sanction of the Governor.

The citizens of the territory have already passed through the first grade of territorial government, and during the last session of Congress have obtained a charter for the second.

This is evidently a special favour granted to the citizens, in consequence of their petition and remonstrance to Congress, against the administration of some of their higher officers of state; as their number was then known to be considerably below the number specified in the ordinance, entitling to the second grade.

It is not necessary to mention the reasons on which that remonstrance was founded, as the whole subject is so amply discussed in the proceedings of the Federal house of representatives, during their last sessions.

PROPRIETY OF THE SOIL.

The difficulties on that subject have been so great, that no grants have yet been obtained in the territory for vacant lands under the American government. For those lands, there are no

less than three public claimants, the Federal government, the legislature of Georgia, and the Georgia companies, as they are called.

From the latter of these are excepted eighteen geographical miles wide, along the national boundary, which the legislature of Georgia, reserved to the state, when they sold the land to the companies.

The claim of the Federal government is supposed to rest on the three following principles,

1st. The enlargement of the province of West Florida by the court of Britain in the year 1770, and, in connexion with that,

2d. The surrender of the territory to the arms of Spain in 1779, and the guarantee of it by that court to the American government in 1796.

3d. Because the royal charter for the province of Georgia, never extended south or west of the river St. Mary's, and the western branch of the river Altamahaw.

In the year 1764, a representation was made to the court of Britain by the lords of trade and plantation, requesting an enlargement of the province of West Florida, above the thirty-first degree of north latitude; in consequence of which royal instructions were sent to Sir Peter Chester, then governor of that province, in March 1770, by which said province was extended up the Mississippi to the mouth of Yazoo river, thence due east to the river Apalachecola, thence down said river to the thirty-first degree of North latitude. Besides, the territory had been actually purchased from the Chactaw Indians in the year 1777, and surveyed by Joseph Purcell, commissioned for that purpose, in 1779.

Nothing further is necessary on the second ground of claim, besides what has been said above.

As to the third, let it be observed, that the original charter of Georgia limited the province within the following boundaries, beginning at the source of the principal branch of Savannah river, or where it intersects the Carolina line; thence down said river to the sea shore; thence along that to the mouth of the river Altamahaw; thence up said river to the source of the most western branch; thence due west to the western, or (as it is called) southern ocean.

Some time after, the government of South-Carolina opened a land office, on that tract of country which lies between the Altamahaw and St. Mary's. Against this the government of Georgia remonstrated to the court of Britain, in consequence of which governor Boone, then Executive of South-Carolina, was ordered by that court to withdraw those warrants, and the limits of Georgia were extended along the sea shore to the mouth of the river St. Mary's; thence up that river to its source; thence a direct course to the source of the Altamahaw, already mentioned.

On whatever footing the claim is founded, the convention, who formed the constitution of Georgia, extended their limits, or supposed them to be extended, to the national boundary on the south, and to the Mississippi on the west. Subsequent to this it is said, that the silence of the Federal government denoted approbation. It is further said, that although the province of West Florida was enlarged by the royal edict, as above; yet it was not promulgued by the royal proclamation, as was done in similar cases, therefore not obligatory.

The tenure by which the companies hold their claim is so well known throughout the Union, that it requires no explanation.

It is also known, that commissioners have been appointed by the Federal government and the state of Georgia, to adjust the above claims; but nothing has yet been effected to prepare the way for opening an office for the vacant lands of the territory.

Besides the difficulties already mentioned, some doubts remain among the citizens respecting the rights of land already granted. When the Spaniards took possession of the territory, a proclamation was issued by the Governor, allowing eighteen months for those who had British grants to renew their titles under the Spanish government. When that time had elapsed, the same length of time was again given, of which the greater part of the resident citizens availed themselves, and renewed their titles. Some neglected, and their titles, together with those of non-residents, continue as they were.

Some British proprietors had large tracts, particularly lord Eglinton, who had a grant for six miles square near the town of Natchez. That tract was chiefly, if not wholly appropriated by the citizens by Spanish grants. The most enlightened cit-

izens, however, as well as the officers of Government, do not doubt the validity of the Spanish titles.

The prices of land are various, according to its equality and situation. Second rate on the frontiers may be had at two dollars, and from that to ten dollars per acre.

Face of the Country.

Along the Mississippi lies a body of land from fifteen to twenty miles wide, and extends to a greater distance up the water courses, scarcely any of which can be termed barren. The high ground is much broken with sharpe ridges and deep, narrow vallies; but the low grounds, of which there is a very large proportion, are very level; nor are they broken with ponds or marshes. When the flood has receded from the low grounds, except some of the flooded land, there is scarcely an acre of marshy or wet ground to be seen.

A high bluff runs along the side of the flooded land, at an average about 150 feet in height; some places much more. Mount Washington, at the bottom of which stands Fort Adams, is 284 feet above the surface of low water. The river bends eastwardly towards the bottom of the mount. Between them is a narrow flat of land on which is erected a handsome battery and several convenient houses for the officers' quarters. No regular barracks are yet built, but the soldiery lodge in detached cabins. Works are shortly to be erected on the top of the mount, from which there is a beautiful and commanding view of the river for several miles both up and down.

Proceeding up the water courses, the high land becomes more level, though not so fertile; but covered with groves of beautiful timber.

The territory, which extend more than 150 miles along the river, is generally well watered, abounding not only with many permanent springs, but has several considerable streams, which, time, may be made boatable many miles into the country.

Of those are Big Black, Bayopiere, and Cole's Creek above the town of Natchez, and Homocheto, and Buffaloe below, all at such regular intervals from each other as to render boating easy from all parts of the territory. At present the extreme

crookedness of the streams, winding through large flats of low grounds, and the vast quantities of timber fallen into them, render the passage of boats impracticable in many parts of them; but when the country comes to be improved, and the streams thrown into strait canals, which may be easily done on account of the softness and openness of the soil, and its entire freedom of all kinds of stone, they may not only be made more convenient for conveying produce to market, but such an improvement would prevent the low grounds from much of that damage by floods to which they are now exposed.

But such an enterprise will not be effected until under a high state of population and improvement.

Towards the lower end of the territory, the hills rise to a great height for the distance of several miles from the river. They are extremely rich, and might be greatly improved in the culture of vines. Mount Washington is only one among many hundreds of promontaries in that part, and is overlooked by several in the neighbourhood; but not so near as to give annoyance.

From many of them the stream of the river is fully in view for several miles; although it is almost universally lined with tall and dense groves of cyprus, cotton wood, sycamore, &c.

What adds to the beauty of the prospect is, that they are generally covered with holly, wild peach-tree and magnolio, the latter of which grows to a large size, and in the spring produces a beautiful, large white flower. They are all evergreens, and exhibit to the admirer of the beauties of nature a romantic and pleasing scene.

The greater part of the territory abounds with vast quantities of lofty timber, except where the cane is large. On the high ground, where the soil is thin, the greater part is red-oak. On the low ground those grow to an immense size. My curiosity led me to measure two of them, one of which was $22\frac{1}{2}$, and the other 26 feet in circumference three feet from the ground. Upon the rich land, high as well as low, the timber is chiefly of the swamp kind, such as walnut, cherry-tree, mulberry, elm, ash, hackberry, iron wood &c. Grape vines grow there to a vast size; also a vine, whose bark resembles that of black-walnut. When bled in a proper season, it produces a sweet, strong liquor from which excellent sugar may be extracted.

Towards the lower end of the territory, such is the size and quantity of cane, even on the highest hills, that, to those who never saw it, a description would appear incredible, and in many places almost to the entire exclusion of timber, except a few scattered trees of walnut, mulberry &c. which indicate the excessive strength of the soil.

No stones are to be seen, even in digging wells, except some quarries of free-stone towards the upper end of the territory; and in various parts of the bluff is a yellow limestone, which appears to be a concretion of shells, and, when burnt, produces good lime.

There are also petrifications of various substances, formed by water oozing out of the bluff. I saw what appeared to be the shoulder blade of a buffaloe formed into a solid stone, and the citizens informed me, that even small, green vegetables assumed the same appearance.

SOIL AND PRODUCE.

After the view which has been given of the natural growth, little need be said as to the general quality of the soil. It seems gradually to increase in strength as you descend the territory to Bayo Sarah, a stream which cuts the national boundary obliquely, where the land is evidently of a quality much superior to the best land in the settlements on Cumberland river, the character of which is so well known that it needs no description.

The soil is exceedingly favourable for indian corn, tobacco, indigo, cotton, hemp and flax. It is also tolerably favourable for wheat, rye, oats and barley; but the grain of those is not so full and heavy as in more northern climes. The tobacco of that country is said to be the best in the Union.

Cotton is now the staple commodity in the territory, and grows to great pe[r]fection. To the maturing of that, as well as other produce, the warmth and length of the season must contribute.

The quantity of cotton in the seed, produced from one acre of land, is from 1000 to 2000 (some say 2500) pounds. About 1500 may be considered the average. Hence, from 130 acres of good land a farmer will expect about 200,000 pounds, for which

quantity many farmers were pitching their crops last spring. That will produce 50,000 pounds of clean cotton.

Almost every farmer of considerable force has a horsegin on his farm. Those will take out of the seed from 500 to 1000 pounds of clean cotton in a day. To those gins the lower class of farmers carry their cotton, which is taken out for the tenth pound. A few gins are turned by water; but dams are so difficult to be kept up, that few risk the expence.

Garden vegetables grow there in the greatest perfection. I ate ripe strawberries on the last week of March, which were cultivated in a garden, and green peas on the first week of April.

It is expected that the sugar cane may be cultivated in the lower part of the territory to advantage. A planter made an experiment last Summer, 15 miles above the boundary, which promised success in the culture of that article.

The greatest inconveniency which attends the soil, is its loose, loamy nature, which exposes it much to washing away, where the land is hilly or rolling; yet it is so open, that the rain sinks immediately on the levellest ground; so that in a short time after the heaviest rain there is no water on the surface to impede the business of the farmer.

CLIMATE.

As the territory lies between the 31st and 34th degrees of north latitude, the climate may be supposed to be temperate. During last Winter, there were not ten days which would have been reckoned cold, for the season, in the middle of North-Carolina, although on the night of the 17th of last December, in various thermometers, with Ferenheits scale the mercury stood from ten to eleven and a half degrees above O; but that was supposed; from various effects produced, to be the coldest night which was ever known by several of the oldest inhabitants, with whom I conversed on the subject.

The citizens informed me, that the heat of Summer is not so excessive as might be expected so far to the southward, on account of frequent and steady breezes which continue in the hot season.

It is evident, that the territory is much more healthy than places between the same parallels in the southern states. This, no doubt, arises from the surface being entirely free from stagnant water, and its elevated situation. In the latter a stranger to the country may be greatly deceived; for example, when he goes into Pinkneyville, a village about two miles above the boundary line, he will think he is on an extensive plain of rich, low ground; but if he proceeds two miles to the westward, without making any ascent, he will find himself on a bluff between 150 and 200 feet high.

In the town and neighbourhood of Natchez as healthy, well-blooded and numerous families of children may be seen, as are common to the back part of the southern states; and this is common to other parts of the territory, except where families live near the flooded lands of the river.

It is granted, that very different accounts are given by many, who descend the river in trading boats, and the appearance of many on their return, correspond with those accounts. But to this it may be replied, that it cannot be supposed the most of those, who are employed as boatmen, are the most regular livers; nor would this idea be readily counteracted in one who would meet twenty or thirty of them on their return through the wilderness. The case would be the same should he be a witness to their conduct and situation while in port. Their lodging either in their boats, or in and about the dram-shops, between the bluff and the river, the humid state of the air, their use of the numerous springs which issue from the bottom of the bluff, and which are strongly impregnated with copperas and other mineral substances, the vast quantities of spirituous liquor consumed by them, &c. &c. are circumstances which evidently operate more against their health, than anything relative to the climate.

It is, indeed, found, that those families, who descend the river late in the Spring, are afflicted with agues and fevers in the following Summer; but this may be rationally accounted for from the humid vapors which arise from the river, and the putridity which the bilge-water in the boat acquires in warm, more than in cold, weather. It would therefore be advisable for those fam-

ilies, who descend the river, to endeavour to reach the territory, at farthest, about the first of February.

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CHARACTER.

As that country, both under the British and Spanish regency, was considered as a sink for the dregs of the more northern parts of the continent, it might be supposed that profligacy of manners would much abound among the citizens. This is not so much the case as might be expected. When persons of that description have forfeited their character in one country, it is scarcely probable they will, without a reformation, support much influence in another.

Among the oldest inhabitants there are many of the most regular, moral conduct. This is a circumstance, perhaps, peculiar to that country, that the most opulent citizens are people of the best morals, together with the few professors of religion in the lower class.

This remark will apply with particular force to the citizens of the town of Natchez. For more than four months which I resided in the territory, a great part of which spent in that town, with one exception, I never heard a profane oath from, nor saw the appearance of intoxication on, an inhabitant of the place, who was in the habit of a gentlemen; but this was far from being the case among the lower class of mechanics, carters, &c.

The state of the territory is indeed deplorable for want of literary instructors. To this may be attributed, as a mean, much of that immorality which abounds, especially among the lower class. English school master[s] are difficult to be obtained; and many strangers, who undertake to act in that department, have contracted such vitiated habits in other parts, that their continuance is often but of short duration.

It would, undoubtedly have salutary effect, should a number of men, well qualified for the business, and of established moral characters, remove to the territory.

The case is no better respecting religious instructors. Only one Episcopalian, one Methodist and two Baptist clergymen, besides a few exhorters, all illiterate except the former, are in the territory.

My colleagues and myself were received with much cordiality and treated by all classes of the citizens with the utmost friendship and attention. We all had repeated and pressing solicitations to return, in order to make a permanent settlement among them; and the regret appeared to be common between them and us, that our obligations to our respective pastoral charges prevented us from giving that encouragement which to them, we were well assured, would have been highly agreeable.

Such indeed were my attachments to that people on account of their peculiar friendship to us, and the influence which our continuing among them promised, that, in parting with friends, I never experienced more tender sensations, or as they may be called, wringings of heart, than I felt in parting both with families and societies; especially as it was under this impression, "That they should see my face no more."

Let the following address serve as a specimen of the disposition of the people toward us.

It was presented to us on the day of our departure; and was signed by more than thirty of the principal citizens of the town and vicinity of Natchez, among whom were a considerable number of the leading, civil characters in the territory.

Messrs. Hall, Bowman, and Montgomery.

Revd. Gentlemen,

"The citizens of Natchez viewing as arrived the moment of your departure, wish to discover a part of what they feel on this affecting occasion.

While, Gentlemen, we desire to return, through you, our sincere thanks to the Presbyterian General Assembly, for their great attention to our dearest interests, we cannot refrain from expressing our cordial approbation of your conduct while amongst us. Although we have not all been educated in the pale of the church of which you are ministers; yet we all feel interested in the object of your mission, and are disposed to maintain the doctrines you have delivered. For we have pleasingly witnessed, that so far from portraying those shades of religious opinions, not practically discernable, you have exhibited to us a moral picture to all equally interesting, (and ought to be) equally engaging. Omitting points barely speculative,

you have insisted on points radical and essential, and evinced by your deportment a desire to produce a combination of influence to support our common christian faith.

Such disposition and exertions we consider as proper & necessary to counteract the influence of infidelity, which had already produced alarming symptoms of moral and social depravity; and it is with pleasure we add, that since your coming among us, we have observed some indications of a beginning change in opinions and habits.

It would, Gentlemen, be too great a restraint upon our feelings, not to mention also the great pains taken by one of you to instruct us in things merely material*; and we trust, we were morally affected by the explanations given to us of those sublime and beautiful laws which govern nature, as well as religiously disposed by your unfolding the far more interesting principle of GRACE in the moral system of things, whose indestructible nature shall survive the general wreck of our present physical existence.

Influenced by considerations so affecting to our mental feelings, we offer you our thanks for the faithful execution of your well-timed mission among us; and our minds follow you with sincere wishes for a safe return to your respective residences.

Receive, Gentlemen, the unfeigned expressions of our concurrent sensations; and permit us to add an earnest solicitation for your return to our territory. Should this, however, be impracticable, you will please to exercise your influence in procuring, and sending others, whose zeal and abilities may operate to accomplish the incipient reformation your labours have instrumentally effected.

We are, Reverend Gentlemen, with sentiments of grateful esteem, Your much obliged, most

Obedient Servants,

JOHN STEELE, &c.

This seems much in favour of the propagation of the gospel in that country, that the most opulent citizens and influential characters appear to be most forward for its encouragement. One of their most wealthy and enlightened citizens expressed

*This refers to a course of lectures on 'natural philosophy, held weekly by one of us in the town of Natchez.

himself to me in these or similar words "Besides promoting the great object of religion, I think that a learned and respectable ministry would have a happy influence to meliorate the state of civil society among us with respect to morals, and would be the best means for the promotion of literature."

Respecting the bulk of the citizens it may be affirmed, that for hospitality to strangers; for politeness of manners, and sumptuous living among the opulent, they may vie with any part of the Union. With respect to the latter of these, it may be observed, that although the vast annual income of the wealthy can easily enable them to use very considerable quantities both of foreign diet & liquors; yet in a country where so many of the conveniences of life are produced as are, or may be, in that territory, if they were to retrench in these particulars, it might be an advantage to the lower classes, whose misfortune it is to strain after those in higher grades, in imitation of their mode of living. Such is the vast fertility of the soil, and so immense are the quantities of provisions and liquors, which are annually poured down the Mississippi, and which may be called domestic, that even those who turn their chief attention to the culture of cotton, and purchase provisions, &c. from the boaters, may, at a cheap rate, support their families.

POPULATION.

As the country lay depopulated from the time of the massacre of the French until it was ceded to Britain, it was, of course, settled by British subjects. Of those some were Europeans and some from the British colonies. Of native Spaniards or their posterity there are scarcely any, and only a few French and Germans.

On account of the different claimants of the soil, as already mentioned, no land office has yet been opened, and consequently no appropriation has been made of vacant lands under the American government; and, from whatever principles of policy it may proceed, emigrants have been prohibited from improving on those lands, or using any means even to secure for themselves the right of pre-emption. This has given an evident check to the population of the territory; for many families who have

removed there, have upon account of that prohibition, gone into the Spanish dominions, some into the province of West Florida, and some over the river into Louisiana. From the flattering prospects which that country seems to hold out, it is probable if that obstacle were removed, that the population would be as rapid as ever was in any part of America.

Government was taking the census, but it was not completed, when we left the territory. It was supposed the number of free, white males would be about 4,000. It was supposed the blacks would amount to one fourth of that number. Supposing the rest of the inhabitants to be three times that number, the whole may be estimated at about 20,000.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

The only trade of the territory is by the Mississippi—downwards from Pittsburg, Kentucky and Tennessee, and upwards from New Orleans. Store goods generally come down the river, being purchased at Baltimore or Philadelphia, and waggoned to Pittsburg; West-India produce and wines from New Orleans.

The river is of depth sufficient to carry ships of any burthen to Natchez; but it is so crooked, so excessive is its current, and is lined with such tall groves of timber, that sails are of little service. One experiment, however, was lately made with a vessel of considerable burden, and the advantage was found to be very considerable, when compared with freighting by row boats.

What renders the upward passage so difficult, is the crookedness of the river, together with the rapidity of the current. When a point is to be passed, the current is usually so rapid, that it cannot be stemed; then force must be applied until the vessel is carried across the river, and is in the eddy under the opposite bank. But as the trade of that country will in future be immense, those difficulties which now appear in some measure insuperable will yet be surmounted. Though the passage of large ships may be tedious, yet that it is practicable is evident; as, during the residence of the French in that country, a frigate of war lay a considerable time at the port of Natchez.

As the number of inhabitants is yet small, the consumption of foreign goods cannot be great.

There are about eight or ten considerable stores in Natchez. A merchant there, who may be ranked among the middle class of dealers, informed me, that his annual sum in dealing amounted, for the last two years, to about 50,000 dollars each.

Besides those there are several stores in the country villages, and other places in the territory; but a considerable number of those belong to the merchants in Natchez.

Cotton is the staple article with the merchants. Its price last winter was from 22 to 23 dollars at Natchez, and from 25 to 26 at New-Orleans.

Flour from the Ohio usually sells at Natchez from 5 to 10 dollars each barrel. Last April the best peach-brandy could be purchased there for less than 50 cents, good rye liquor 35 per gallon, Indian corn at 37½ per bushel, and other articles of produce in proportion; but at that time the market was rather glutted. Dry goods are, at least, 25, some articles 50, per cent higher in price than in Salisbury.

The advantages of trade, in that country will in some future time be incalculable. This is evident, when we take into view the extreme fertility of the soil, and its aptitude to produce the most valuable articles for exportation. Add to this its proximity to the Mississippi, not only well adapted to carry off its produce; but which will always flow with almost all the necessaries and conveniences of life. When we further take a view of the western parts of Pennsylvania, the two territories North West of the Ohio, the states of Kentucky and Tennessee, together with that vast scope of country which lies within our national boundary, both above and below the Ohio, which yet is uninhabited; when we extend our views still further to the westward, the Missouri and all its tributary streams, &c. &c. the produce of all which will, in some future period, glide down the Mississippi, the idea swells so upon the mind, that it need not be considered a hyperbole to say that even the Danube will scarcely be able to vie with the Mississippi in its commercial productions.

Among all the necessaries of life, salt is one of the most expensive articles to be procured in that country. But it is probable

this inconveniency will soon be removed as there are said to be inexhaustible sources of rock-salt lately found in the bluffs of the Missouri. I am now in the possession of a piece received from a merchant in Natchez, which he received as coming from one of those banks. It is of a whiter and harder texture, and more difficult to dissolve than the common alum-salt, though equally pungent to the taste.

If such a source of it be there as is reported, a matter I never heard called in question, it is one among the many instances of the beneficence of a benign Providence exercised towards our continent.

CURIOSITIES.

The river Mississippi itself is indeed a curiosity. Notwithstanding the vast numbers of large rivers of which it is composed, independent of the Missouri, which is known to be the largest part at their confluence, it is not more than 180 perches wide at Natchez, nor does it, as I was informed, appear anything considerably broadened until some distance below the national boundary.

By the excessive drought of last Summer and Autumn, the river was lower last Winter than ever it was known by the oldest inhabitants. That displayed to view a flat of more than 100 paces wide along the bottom of the usual bank, at low water, which, probably, was never visible, at least for ages, to human eyes.

On that lie some trunks of trees in a complete state of petrification, bearing no marks of timber, except the form, and different colours of white and red wood, both of which are much changed.

On the same lie thousands of bodies, which have the appearance of stone, of all sizes from the bulk of walnuts to that of large pots. Many of the large ones are broken; they have the appearance of fragments of pots, and seems to be rich, iron ore. A stroke of a hammer will break them to pieces like an earthen vessel. They incline to a globular form, with some flats on their surfaces, and within each is a nucleus of a white, marly [?] substance, about the consistency, when dry, of chalk. The mass of the above plain is of a substance between hard clay and

stone, mixed with gravel, and so strongly impregnated with copperas that it becomes quite sensible, after rain and clear sunshine, both to the eye and the taste.*

What renders those circumstances more peculiar, is, that the place above described was lately a flat of fertile, low ground, and that even the place on which the town of Natchez stood, as lately as the year 1780, is now some distance in the river, according to the account of the inhabitants who lived there at that time; and very considerable losses have been sustained by the citizens, not only in buildings, but also in movables, by the sudden sinking of houses. A few small houses yet stand under the bluff, but as the river is annually encroaching on the flat of ground on which they stand, they must in a few years, suffer the same fate with the former. Chasms had opened, last Winter, of two feet wide above fifty paces from the bank of the river.

When the flood is rising, the bank is almost daily falling into the river; and where the boats are fastened, the boatmen examine whether there be any opening in it, as the boats are often in danger of being sunk by the falling in of the bank.

An old Spanish garrison stands on a promontary on the bluff, a little below the landing. Several respectable citizens in town informed me, that a chasm was opening 100 paces east of the garrison so that it is alledged the whole mount will, in process of time, tumble into the river. It was my intention to have viewed it, but have it to regret, that it was neglected until I left the place.

The flooded land, on the west side of the river is above 30 miles wide. By comparing the growths upon it, which are chiefly cypress, sycamore and cotton-wood, with those on the land formed within the recollections of the present old inhabitants, it is alledged to be all formed by the river receding from west to east.

About a mile above the landing are several caverns, horrible, from their depth, to a spectator standing above them, called *The Devil's Punch Bowls*.

They are divided in some places, by sharp, narrow ridges, on which a footman scarcely pass with safety.

*Of the three above materials the author is possessed of samples.

Those ridges terminate in points towards the river. That part of the bluff, in which they are, is about the usual height. The caverns are sunk to, or near, the level of the flooded land, into which they open on the west side.

They appear to have been sunk by some subterranean concussion, as the soil of the precipices is not like that on other parts of the bluff; but of a very steril quality, producing anything except short brushy pines, which I do not recollect to have seen in any other part.

Among the works of art, the mounds, cast up by the aborigines may be considered as some of the curiosities of the territory. They are to be seen in almost all parts of it, especially on large flats of sterile, low ground. Not less than eight or ten are in one of Col. Hutchen's fields, others on the low grounds of Homocheto, Buffaloe, &c. Of none of those I took the dimensions, but several of them appear to be 16 feet in perpendicular height, and may contain half an acre of land on the top. Near those I could see no hollow ground from which the earth which composes them could be taken.

But by far the largest I saw in the territory stands within Mr. John Griggin's enclosure, about half a mile N. W. of Ellicottsville. It is on a piece of ground moderately hilly; but from the appearance of the place, little advantage could be taken of any rising ground. My instruments for mensuration were not very accurate; but I am persuaded the truth will not be exceeded in the account given in the following description.

The mound is a rectangular parallelogram, though now washed rounding at the corners. It measures on the top 38 perches from east to west, and 28 from north to south, containing an area of six acres and 104, perches. It is considerably larger at the base. This area is a horizontal level, except the bases of eight smaller mounds which stand upon it. Round the large mound is a wide ditch, except, that on the south side there is a passage eight feet wide, descending by a gentle declivity to the common surface of the ground, above which the main platform is elevated about 45 feet; nor is there, as I can recollect, any ditch at the east end, where the fill falls off a little abruptly towards a hollow, running to the north, in which is a permanent spring about sixty paces from the bottom of the mound.

Towards the spring there appears to have been a covered way from the top of the principal mound, as there is a deep, narrow trench down that end, along which the rain runs in rapid torrents; and no such appearance is on any other quarter.

On the west end of the platform stands a smaller mound on a base of five perches in diameter, 28 feet in height. On the east end stands another on a smaller base, 12 feet high.

Three of a smaller size stand at regular intervals along the north side, and three others along the south side, nearly opposite to those on the north. Those are now from four to six or eight feet high; but they, together with those on the ends, appear to have been considerably washed down.

By comparing the ditch with the earth cast up, it does not appear that the one could have produced the fourth, nor perhaps the tenth part of the other. Be that as it may, it is a question not easily solved, how the savage state, which is usually averse from manual labor, and destitute of iron tools, should ever produce such a stupendous structure.

The largest tree on the mound was a red-oak. It had been cut down last summer, and I carefully counted the growths, which were 73 in number. This carried the date back exactly to the massacre of the French.

I likewise counted the growths of various other trees in sundry places in the territory, where the land appeared to have been cultivated, and found, without exception, the age of the oldest between 60 and 73 years.

Various are the conjectures, respecting the use of those mounds. Some alledge they were designed for places of worship, others places of defence. Probably the one described above was designed for both; for which the following reasons are assigned.

The French say, that the great mound in the Apple village was the seat of the Indians' temple, or house of worship. It stands on the bank of Second Creek, and the others, which are eight or ten in number, and of a much less size, stand in two rows towards the front, but a little to the right and left. This is the position of those above described.

An intelligent citizen of the territory also informed me, that while the French were collecting their forces, after the

massacre, the Natchez Indians cast up a mound, a few miles above the town, which though on a smaller base than the above, yet it still stands more than 80 feet high. It gave me much regret that this information was not communicated to me until I had left the neighbourhood, otherwise I would have made the place a visit.

The most probable conjecture, therefore, is, that the eminence on the west end was the seat of their temple, and the body of the work was designed as a place of common defence; for although there is no appearance of breast works round the top of the main platform; yet many might cover themselves by the small mounds; and it is, besides, evident, that, from such a stand, defendants might have great advantage, in the use of arrows and other missile weapons, against assailants.

That mound is not within several miles of any considerable water course, or any body of low ground, yet the neighbourhood round it, for some miles, as far as I had opportunity of examining, appeared to have been almost universally cleared.

This is evident, not only from several places which had not recovered the timber, but also from the form of the trees, being swelled at the root, short in the trunk, and heavy in the top, a form very different from the native timber of the forest in that country; but whether the inhabitants were French or Indians no vestige is left by which to determine, except what has been mentioned.

A tradition has currency in that country, that those stupendous works were raised by prisoners of war, but this seems to have no other foundation than the supposed similarity between the former and present savages, inferring the aversion from labour in the one, from what we see in the other; hence, that such an enterprize would never have been performed by them, except under principles of dire necessity; but such reasoning is by no means conclusive, as we know not what alterations may have taken place among them, either as to their form of government or mode of living.

Another curiosity which occurred to my view was the Pigeon Roost, on a branch of Big Black, about 60 miles below the Chickasaw nation. The reader may call it natural or artificial as he pleases. An account of the phenomenon there exhibited

carries with it such an air of the marvellous that had I been the only spectator, it would have been passed over in silence.

The pigeons had taken their station in and about a place known by the name of the Hurricane Swamp—The greater part of the large timber had been blown down, and they had perched on the branches of the small timber that remained; and which being broken by them, now hang down like the inverted brush of a broom. Under each tree and sapling lay an astonishing quantity of their dung, of which, from the specimens we saw, there must have been, not only hundreds, but thousands of waggon loads.

Round each resting place was a hillock raised a considerable height above the surface, although the substance had been there 18 months when we made our observations on the place. At that time the heaps were, no doubt greatly sunk. What bounds they occupied we could not ascertain, as the swamp was so full of bramble and fallen timber we could not leave the road. It is near a mile diameter, and as far as I can recollect their traces were the chief part of the way, and about 100 paces on the north side of the swamp.

The two following instances may serve to give some faint idea of their number. The one is a hickory tree perhaps more than a foot diameter, which may be seen by travellers for years to come, on the right hand of the road, near the northern entrance of the swamp on which a large number had settled. The tree had gone down by an easy descent, which was evident from its roots having raised a bank on the opposite side, and the bracers not torn out of the earth. That the tree had been considerably straight is evident from this circumstance, that a heap of dung lay round the root. The pigeons appear to have kept their station when the tree went down, for when the top rested on the ground, the body bent into a bow, the middle being about three feet high, in which position it still stands. Many similar instances may be there seen, and many of a more brittle texture were broken off in the middle.

The other instance is a place about a half a mile from the swamp, where a number of the pigeons had lighted on a thick wood of young red-oak, the limbs of which were almost universally broken down, on a tract of ground containing, by a sum-

mary glance of the eye about eight or ten acres. There they had made no tarriance, as they left no hillocks about the trees at the other places. The Chactaws killed vast numbers of them before they went away.

In an old field in the Chickasaw nation, on the defence of a hill to a small creek, where the path is washed down about a foot below the common surface, is a solid bed of as proper clam and oyster-shells as ever lay on the shore of the Atlantic. They are in a complete state of petrification, and about the texture of limestone.

They are not concreted into a rock; but loose from each other, though in close order. This is on one of the head branches of the western fork of the Tombigbee, 300, perhaps 400 miles from the ocean. Whoever takes a view of them, or the specimens of them of which I am now possessed, must harden his heart against conviction if he call them the mimics of nature. They have the form of the most perfect natural shells; and in many which I examined, the meat lies in its native shape, of a white substance of the texture and consistency of chalk, and the shell of a gray colour.

The nation of the Natchez are said to have been a shrewd, sagacious people. Of this the scheme of extirpating the French is no inconsiderable evidence; for in all probability, had it not been for the interference of the old dowager, the whole colony would have fallen in the same fatal hour.

A curious anecdote is related of an Indian chief of that country. In an early period of the French settlement on the Mississippi, a trader made a voyage up the river with a quantity of arms and ammunition, which he exchanged to the natives to advantage. Another adventurer made the same voyage the next year, expecting they had exhausted their ammunition. In this he was disappointed; for they had still a considerable quantity. They were solicitous to know how powder was produced. He gave them to understand, that it was sown, and produced by way of crop, and recommended their savannas as the most suitable soil for that purpose. They accordingly sowed what they had and purchased his cargo to serve them until the new crop would come to maturity. They set guards round the place to defend it from wild beasts, and watched with anxiety, but no crop appeared.

The next year another trader went to the same place with a quantity of goods, was received courteously by the chief, and a house was provided in which he stored his cargo. On the next day the Indians convened, and began to open his bales. One pulled this way and another that way, until his goods were all gone. He went to the chief & remonstrated. The chief told him gravely, that as soon as they had gathered the crop of powder he should be paid, and so he was dismissed.

HURRICANES

Are frequent, and often violent, in that country. By the devastation which they have made, they appear to be more common in the level country towards the Chickasaw nation than in the territory.

On our passage down, we crossed the trace of one about 120 miles from Natchez. Its direction was from west to east, & our road crossed it nearly at right angles.

For the distance of near a half a mile on the north side, the timber lay universally towards the south. In the middle it was tossed in every direction. On the south side it lay universally towards the north. This showed the most evident marks of a violent whirlwind, carrying up the atmosphere in the centre of the storm, consequently causing a rarefaction of the air which would occasion the denser air to press tolerably and beat down the timber on each side with the tops toward each other.

Similar appearances were exhibited to us in the effects of another hurricane, which passed a few miles south of the above, a few days before our return, and which must have happened about the same time with that which did so much damage at and near Wilkinsonville about the first of last April.

Its direction was from S. W. to N. E. We fell obliquely on its trace on our right. On that side a dense grove of timber was almost totally levelled as far as our view could extend. On our left were a few trees, all fallen towards the S. E. Proceeding thus along its verge for near a mile, where the fallen

timber all lay as above, we were turned into the midst of the wreck by a deep valley on our left. There the effects, being then fresh, were indescribable. Thousands of trees, of all sizes, were laid prostrate—some torn out of the earth, some twisted like withes others shattered to pieces so that where there had been, a few days before, a tall and dense forest there remained scarcely any thing except a few mutilated stubs, as a memorandum of the dreadful catastrophe.

Let the two following instances serve to give some idea of the violence of the tempest.

A hickory about 20 inches, diameter, was torn out of the earth, except, that it was held by some of the bracers. It fell on a declivity, making an angle of about ten degrees with the plane of the horizon. The top was afterwards driven up the hill by the force of the storm, until it had swept the ground in a segment of a circle about 110 degrees. That distance was easily perceived as the body of the tree had made a deep impression in the ground where it had fallen; and such was the force of the storm that a sluice of water had followed the tree up the hill, carrying with it a drift of small brush, leaves and other vegetable substances, so as to raise a bank of not less than two feet high against the top of the tree.

The ground was swept so clean, that we stood astonished at the phenomenon, until we perceived the course which the tree had taken.

The other instance was another hickory, near the same place, about 15 inches diameter. It had been twisted from near the ground to the height of seven feet, where, as it was of a very tough texture, it was shivered into a vast number of splinters, and the top had fallen to the ground. As the bark had split, and separated from the wood, there was an opportunity of observing, that before the tree fell, it had twisted fully once round in the above distance.

Such a minute detail would not have been given of the above circumstances, did not those, and similar phenomena, confirm me still more in a theory which occurred to me a number of years ago, on the formation of large hailstones which frequently fall, in Summer, in southern climes.

A few thoughts on the subject were sent to a number of the American, Philosophical Society about the year 1795, and the substance of them, as far as my recollection serves, (for no copy was kept) is subjoined in a marginal note.*

*The leading hypotheses in this theory, is, that hail is generated by whirlwinds.

When we take a view of small whirlwinds, which happen in dry weather, and consider to what a vast height they must carry up leaves, and other light substances, and compare them with the whirlwinds which must accompany such violent tornadoes as those above described, we must necessarily suppose the latter will carry up the humid vapors, which compose the clouds, to a vast height above the surface of the earth. It is also known, that there is a certain height where the action of the Sun's rays is too feeble to dissolve water when congealed, or keep it in a state of fluidity: hence perennial snows lie on the Andes, over which the sun passes vertically twice every year. We may then rationally conclude that those vapors are carried far above what may be called the freezing point; where they must necessarily congeal. After those particles have become stationary, they must descend; & as they are far distant from the earth, will gravitate a little more strongly to each other than when near the surface. When a number of them come into contact, they will be held together by the attraction of cohesion, and will necessarily descend with more velocity than when in a separate state; and as the vapor may be carried up a great distance above the freezing point, the mass, when formed, how small soever, will acquire bulk by falling through such a vast number of small particles. When a considerable mass is formed, it will acquire bulk after it has reached the vapor in a fluid, though cold, state; for that coming into contact with the frozen mass will enter its interstices and congeal; and this congelation may continue until the hailstone, thus forming, has fallen far below the freezing point.

This may be rendered, at least, probable by a simple experiment. Take two flat pieces of ice in your mouth, rubbing off with your tongue any roughness which may be upon them; then bring them together, and wherever the surfaces come into contact with each other, the water between them will immediately congeal, and they will become one solid mass.

The appearance of hailstones will universally agree with this account; for in the centre of each there will be found a gray, porous nucleus in a shell of solid, transparent ice, and smooth on the surface when they fall in rain; but if no rain fall with them, which sometimes happens, they will be ragged masses of gray, porous ice. It is easy on the above principle to account for both these appearances.

If we consider the analogy between hail storms and whirlwinds, it will tend to strengthen the hypothesis. It is evident they both have their waxings and waning. This is evident to every beholder of common whirlwinds, that after a violent exertion they will appear almost to die away, then acquire new strength and act as vigorously as before.

To an instance analogous to this I was a witness in the trace of a hail-storm, which passed down South-Yadkin in June, 1793. The cloud, which passed a few miles south of the place where I was, appeared extremely dense, attended with hard thunder, and carried with it the appearance of a violent tempest.

Its passage was from west to east. On the second ensuing day I visited a farm, where it had made terrible devastation. A considerable quantity of forest timber was broken, a number of fruit trees torn up, wheat, rye, &c., almost entirely ruined by hail, and the corn so scat-

From Tennessee river to the territory, which for the most part is almost one continued plain, the country, for ages past, appears to have been exposed to hurricanes; as many trees of a large size may be seen on the hillocks raised by their predecessors, when blown down.

tered that the farmer had his hands then employed in cropping it off by the ground to make way for a new set of leaves.

Though the cloud passed over a considerably populous country, yet no damage was sustained by hail to the westward. To the eastward the wind was not so violent, and only a few scattered hailstones for the distance of five miles, where a second effusion of hail fell, and near, another farm, of which the crop suffered nearly as much as on the other. The storm then changed its course about two points to the northward, and after passing four miles further another effusion fell on a third farm; and although several farms intervened between the first and the third, only the three sustained any considerable damage.

These effects can be rationally accounted for on the foregoing principles. Supposing a whirlwind to attend the storm, of which there were the most evident traces, it is easy to see how part of the cloud, when carried up by one exertion of the whirlwind, at one place, would fall in hail in another.

An instance exactly similar may be seen in the trace of a hurricane, in the forks of Cole's Creek in the Mississippi territory. There may be seen a dense forest of the sturdiest oaks laid almost universally prostrate. In following its trace there are evident marks of the waxing and waning of the wind, and the inhabitants informed me it was the same with a heavy hail which accompanied the hurricane. For the distance of four miles, scarcely a trace of the storm could be seen, and then the timber prostrate as before.

To the whole of this theory it may be objected, that many showers of large hail fall, when there is little or no wind on the surface of the earth.

To this it may be replied, that this is no evidence that there is no wind in the higher regions of the atmosphere. On the contrary, many clouds exhibit evident tokens of the most violent commotions, when there is perfect calm on the surface. This is found to be a fact by the balloon-voyagers who are often exposed to violent tempests, if we can give them credit, when the atmosphere is calm beneath.

APPENDIX.

When the foregoing history was begun, it was my intention to have drawn it out to greater length; but the weight and diversity of my professional business obliged me to bring it into narrow bounds.

Respecting the sources from which my information has been drawn, they are as follows, What respects the settlement of the French was taken from a history of Louisiana, written by a Frenchman, of which I had only a cursory glance while in the territory.

Respecting the different claims on the territory, my information was chiefly from the report of the Attorney general of the Union, made by order of Congress concerning said claims. The remainder was taken from conversation with some of the most enlightened citizens, and my own observations.

As it may be supposed that every country has its advantages and disadvantages, the reader may say, that in the foregoing history the account must, at best, be partial, as the advantages are stated but the inconveniences are omitted. To this it is replied, that in such a southern clime the winter season is a time in which a stranger from one more northwardly, will take up the most favourable idea of a country.

This consideration was strongly impressed on my mind, while in the territory, which led me particularly to enquire with what inconveniences their advantages were balanced.

According to my best information they may be reduced to the following. White men who had emigrated there from more northern climes informed me, that they found in the Summer an enervation and weakness of body, which rendered them unfit for such hard and incessant labour as that to which they had been accustomed. This is reasonable to suppose; for although the Summer be not intensely hot, yet the mildness and warmth of the Winter deprives them of that bracing of the solids which the body would acquire in a colder region.

The citizens also informed me, that in Summer the human species are greatly infested with musketoes, and the beasts to an excessive degree with flies.

To conclude, from every view I was able to take of that country, it appears to be a place where property may, generally, be more easily obtained than any place in the Union; and if the citizens be wise and good enough to improve the blessings which a beneficent Providence is holding out to them, they need not be wanting in any thing which has a tendency to promote human happiness.

N. B. The Author's information, as to the number of inhabitants in the territory was to himself very doubtful; and he now sees from the census that it was very erroneous, as it stated more than double their number.

FINIS.