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The Mississippi Floods.

BY JAMES A. MITCHELL, PH. D.

The United States of America, abounding in material resources which have so largely contributed to the prosperity of its people, is not less rich in physical features the study of which has given a wonderful stimulus to the prosecution of scientific research. Niagara's cataract, the splendid chain of great fresh water lakes unsurpassed by any in the world, the vast prairie lands of the Middle West, the grand canons of the western plains, the geysers of the Yellowstone, and the turbid "Father of Waters," the Mississippi, afford the scientist fields for interesting and profitable observation elsewhere unexcelled, if not unequalled. Of these imposing works of nature, none perhaps has so deeply impressed the beholder as the Falls. I need not recall to your minds the beautiful words of Chateaubriand, painting with all the wealth of action that was his, the sublimity of the scene before him as he stood entranced upon the brink of the cataract. I need not describe for you the admiration of Pere Marquette, as he gazed, for the first time, upon the broad waters of Lake Superior, nor of those other explorers who first made known to the world the existence of the Yellowstone with its admirable finger marks of God. Listen, however, to the words of Hernando de Soto, as he catches his first glimpse of the Mississippi's mighty flood. "Stand back," says he to his followers, "and let me gaze my fill!" This was in 1552, just sixty years after Columbus had realized the hopes of a life time and confirmed the trust of Juan Perez and the Queen of Spain. The scene of the consummation of de Soto's fond dream—the discovery of the great river—is thus beautifully described by the American dramatist, George H. Miles:

"At last, these shores are gardens, and these thickets, cities! There lies more wealth within those golden waves. Than doomed the Inca to his bed, Or forest the chain of mountains. This is the legacy I leave to Europe! Hernando de Soto claims for God and Spain All the broad continent and sunny Isles Washed by the waters of the Mississippi!"

This heirloom of its first discoverer was long neglected, in fact never reclaimed in whole by his countrymen. "After de Soto glimpsed the river, a fraction short of a quarter of a century elapsed, and then Shakespeare was born; lived a trifle more than half a century, then died; and when he had been in his grave considerably more than half a century, the second white man saw the Mississippi"—an interval of over one hundred and thirty years. Then it was that those intrepid sons of France, Joliet and Marquette, reaching the head waters of the great river, launched their frail canoes on its wide and rapid current and, turning Southward, "paddled down stream, through a solitude unrelieved by the faintest trace of man." These explorers satisfied themselves that the outlet of the Mississippi was not the Gulf of California, nor the Atlantic Ocean, but believed that it entered into the Gulf of Mexico. They returned to Canada without satisfying themselves of the certainty of the latter fact; this remained for the fearless La Salle, who, in 1681, got his expedition under way and completed the work which hitherto had remained undone. Then it was as the historian Parkman, says, that "the fertile plains of Texas; the vast basin of the Mississippi, from its frozen northern springs to the sultry borders of the Gulf; for the woody ridges of the Alleghenies to the bare peaks of the Rocky Mountains—a region of Savannas and forests, sun cracked deserts and grassy prairies watered by a thousand rivers, ranged by a thousand warlike tribes, passed beneath the sceptre of the Sultan of Versailles."

Shortly after this last exploration French settlements were located along the Mississippi, but above its confluence with the Ohio, and on the South, between Natchez and New Orleans. The settlement increased slowly during the eighteenth century, and not until after the declaration of American Independence and the cession of Louisiana to the United States did this region become more thickly settled and the characteristic features of its great water-way become known. The Mississippi river proper traverses a vast plain which occupies the central portion of the United States. Together with the Missouri river, its main branch, it is the longest river in the world, being upwards of 4,300 miles in length. However, the source of the main river is usually ascribed to Lake Itaska, in the State of Minnesota, whence it courses through almost 3,000 miles of varied landscape to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico. It is navigable for steam boats from its mouth to the Falls of St. Anthony's in Minnesota, a distance of 2,200 miles, or by the Missouri River 3,100 miles. There are 54 tributaries admitting of steamboat navigation, many of which are in themselves rivers of great size and volume. Beside there are over 1,000 bayous, creeks and rivers that are navigable by floats and keel-boats.

The depth of the river is considerable throughout its entire length but especially in what is called the "Lower River" or that portion which extends from Cairo, in the State of Illinois, where the Ohio river joins the main stream to the Gulf, a distance of almost 1,200 miles. At Cairo the river's depths is about 80 feet with a gradual increase reaches over 130 feet near its mouth. This great depth is owing to the fact that instead of widening toward its mouth, the river bed becomes narrower; the current, too, is extremely rapid, the volume of water immense and the fall of sufficient amount to give an added impetus and force to the eroding process by which it necessarily hollows out the channel. This is evident when it is noted that from Cairo half way down the river the average width at time of high water is one mile, from this point the bed gradually narrows down to almost half a mile where the river approaches its mouth. The volume of water annually discharged by the Mississippi is enormous when one considers that its amount is twenty-five times greater than the River Rhine discharges and almost three hundred and forty times as much as does the Thames, then he has some idea of its enormous volume.

The Mississippi Basin in second only to the Valley of the Amazon, yet it embraces 1,226,600 square miles exclusive of the lake basin of Texas and New Mexico, containing 300,000 square miles and which is sometimes included in this vast territory. The river Rhine drains but one-fifteenth as much as the whole continent of Europe, less Russia, Norway and Sweden; does not equal in extent the Mississippi's Basin. While this whole region is especially interesting from a geological standpoint, we will, however, confine ourselves to a more complete consideration of what is technically called the flood-plain, that is, the area liable to overflow, and which, in respect to the Mississippi River Basin, usually affords matter of greater interest and profit to the inquiring scientist.

The flood-plain proper of the Mississippi extends from the mouth of the Ohio River to the Gulf and has an area of 30,000 square miles. This flood plain is made up of two very interesting divisions, the River Swamp and the Delta. The former is that portion of the flood plain which was land surface when the river began to run and which has since been built up by deposit; the latter is the portion of the flood plain reclaimed from the sea by the constant deposit of sediment at the mouth.

The river swamp of the Mississippi extends from the mouth of the Ohio to about Baton Rouge, in Louisiana, below which the delta begins. The river swamp region of the Mississippi Basin has been the

scene of its most distinctive vagaries and this has been due largely to its topographical nature. Here for centuries the river has been depositing the sediment, which its turbulent flood and equally raging tributaries have been bringing from the mountainous regions, whence they take their rise. And now the flood plain is a vast tract of alluvial matter, built up to a depth ranging from ten to fifty feet. The slope is gentle and the course of the river wonderfully sinuous. This extensive plain is here and there broken by limestone bluffs which rise to a height ranging from 100 to 300 feet above the river tide. These bluffs are not very numerous considering the great distance traversed; however they offer the safest sites for cities and towns. Hence, we find from Cairo, Illinois, to Natchez, Mississippi, that the important cities and towns are built on the bluffs; so that in flood time they at least do not suffer so much as the "bottom lands" from the inundating waters.

The bed of the stream, as well as the constituent parts of the alluvial plain, is made up of a kind of loam, coarse, silicious sand and a tenacious clayey soil. The plain is exceedingly fertile, as one would naturally suppose, but this soil does not offer sufficient resistance to the river's strong current which in consequence is constantly excavating its banks in "bends" and forming new lands on points throughout the alluvial region. This action is progressing much more rapidly in the upper part than in the lower where it seems to have ceased. These banks are underlain by strata of nearly pure sand hence a slight change in the direction of the current at high water—producing a new sand bar, a new island, a new cut off or any other cause turns its force more directly against a certain portion of the bank. The sand is washed out from under the tenacious soil. At first, the water supports the land, but when the river subsides the bank falls by its own weight and being dissolved is swept away. These sand strata are often below water mark—an unfortunate circumstance, which renders the protection of the banks difficult if not impossible.

It occasionally happens by this constant caving in, two bends approach each other until the river cuts the narrow neck of land between them and forms a "cut off," which suddenly and materially reduces its length. The increased slope of the water surface at once makes this new bed the main channel of the river. The curious freaks produced by these "cut-offs" are extremely interesting. In the space of one hundred and seventy-five years the Lower Mississippi has shortened itself 243 miles. That is a trifle over one mile and a third per year. Again the upper and lower mouths of the "old river," as it is called after one of these "cut-offs" has taken place, are gradually closed up with sediment, driftwood, etc., until eventually one of the crescent shaped lakes so common, especially in the lower portion of the alluvial region, is formed.

The dates of formation of many of these lakes are long antecedent to the discovery of the country as is proved by numerous crescent lakes, upon both banks of the Mississippi, mentioned as such by the earliest explorers. These changes have been constantly going on since the settlement of the country, but the old maps and records are so defective that it is impossible to determine much about those which occurred prior to 1800.

Upon the islands the action of the Mississippi is not less striking than upon the banks. They are constantly forming, disappearing or becoming connected by the main land by the filling up of their chutes. This process of formation and destruction is interesting. Driftwood becomes lodged upon a sandbar. Deposition of sediment follows. A willow growth succeeds. In high water more deposition is caused by the resistance thus presented to the current. In low water the sand blown by the wind

lodges among the bushes. An island then rises gradually to the level of high water and sometimes even above it, sustaining a dense growth of cotton woods, willows, etc. By a similar process the island becomes connected with the mainland; or, by a slight change of direction of current, the underlying sandbar is washed away, the new-made land caves into the river and the island disappears.

Among the islands which have disappeared during the present century may be named one in Plumb Point bend, just above Osceola in Arkansas, where now a large sand bar exists; another island just below the mouth bayou Plaquemines has entirely disappeared. So great has been these changes in the bed of the river as to give rise to the remark that, "nearly the whole of that 1,300 miles of old Mississippi River, which La Salle floated down in his canoes, two hundred years ago is good solid dry ground now."

Such are the peculiarities of this great water-way in that portion of the flood plain, known as the river swamp. The second portion or delta of the Mississippi begins where it first sends off a branch to the sea. This point is the head of the river Atchafalaya in Louisiana which is therefore adopted as the northern limit of the delta.

This region is naturally divided into four parts: (The Atchafalaya district, The Terre Bonne district, The La Fourche district and The Lake Pontchartrain district.)

The soil of the first division lies above the level of the Gulf of Mexico. Of the three other divisions about 4,000 square miles, or one half of their total area is composed of sea marsh. The entire surface is below the level of the river floods and composed of alluvial or fluvial matter.

(To Be Continued)

"I HAD long suffered from indigestion," writes G. A. LeDeis, Cedar City, Mo. "Like others I tried many preparations but never found anything that did me good until I took Kodol Dyspepsia Cure. One bottle cured me. A friend who had suffered similarly I put on the use of Kodol Dyspepsia Cure. He is gaining fast and will soon be able to work. Before he used Kodol Dyspepsia Cure indigestion had made him a total wreck. T. E. Zimmerman & Co.

You were mistaken when you said he was a Populist." "How do you know?" "I asked him how he was getting along and he said, 'I can't complain.'"—Chicago Post.

Mrs. T. Bridgeman of Parshallville, Mich., was troubled with salt rheum for thirteen years and had tried a number of doctors without relief. After two applications of BANNER SALVE, her hand became better and in a short time she was entirely cured. Beware of substitutes. Zimmerman & Co.

"A splendid stroke! Did you follow the ball, caddy?" "No'm; but I think that gentleman with the red coat can tell where it struck. I see him feelin' of his head."—Tit-Bit.

S. A. INGALLS, Crown Point, N. Y., writes: "My wife suffered from kidney trouble for years. She was induced to try FOLEY'S KIDNEY CURE and in less than a week after, she was greatly improved and three bottles cured her." T. E. Zimmerman & Co.

On The Way Home. Mr. Ferguson—What did you think of that soubrette's performance?

Mrs. Ferguson—Why, she dances well enough, but she can't sing a bit. Our church choir soprano has got a tremolo that would smother her to death.—Chicago Tribune.

Buy and Try a Box Tonight. While you think of it, go buy and try a box of Cascarets Candy Cathartic, ideal laxative, tonight. You'll never regret it. Genuine tablets stamped C. C. C. Never sold in bulk. All druggists, etc.

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BIG PRICES FOR ANIMALS.

A Small Sized Fortune Needed to Buy a Giraffe.

Because of the difficulty of getting it to America and of keeping it alive after it arrives a good giraffe is quoted at \$7,000.

Next to the giraffe in the aristocracy of cost come the rhinoceros and the hippopotamus, worth from \$4,000 to \$5,000 each. If a dealer could breed these animals, he could get rich, but the big mammals rarely breed in captivity. About the only place in America where hippopotamus have been known to raise their young is in the menagerie in Central Park, New York.

A chimpanzee of size is worth \$5,000, and when one reaches the intelligence of the late Mr. Crowley, Chico or Johanna he is beyond a fixed price. The monkey kind are most uncertain property. The animal man says they are certain to die. But the ordinary ones can be bought very cheaply.

One can buy a nice young baby elephant for \$1,000 at times, but a really good animal is worth from \$1,800 to \$2,000. An elephant does not command the maximum price because of the beauty of his countenance, the elegance of his figure, his intellectual endowments or his size, but because of a sweet, sunny disposition. A mean elephant is about the most evil of living things. Sooner or later he has to be killed, usually after he has slain two or three keepers and done more damage than he is worth. Of two animals of equally good disposition the larger and finer commands the higher price, of course, but the most magnificent beast with an inclination for murder isn't worth as much as a very common one that is trustworthy—that is, ordinarily so, for the sweetest tempered have days when they seem inspired of Satan—Julius Munsey.

A Bit of Realism.

An instance of the way in which the acting of a play grows may be taken from Ellen Terry's playing in "Mme. Sans-Gene." In the play in question the washerwoman duchess is having a lesson from a professor of dancing. The business of the play requires her to be awkward in her attempts at dancing, and the actress is awkward, but lightly awkward. She has put on a long riding habit in order to become accustomed to manipulate her court train in the dance and is so much troubled with it that finally she tucks it over her arm while she is learning to take the steps. The train keeps slipping off her arm and has to be perpetually replaced, and the episode is a cause of much boisterous amusement.

One night in a great English manufacturing city she was playing the part with even more than her usual verve. She was lost in the assumed character so thoroughly that it was real to her, and the ex-washerwoman, with her mind harassed and worried by the trying conditions of her artificial court life, instinctively returned to the habits of her youth. In a moment of abstraction, finding the fat roll of stuff across her arm, she instinctively began to wring it out. The response of the audience was electrical. Every woman—and man—who had ever seen a wash-tub recognized the sincerity of the action. This moment of creative instinct was recorded in the actress's mind and has been repeated ever since.—Cosmopolitan.

Had troubles of His Own.

"Sir," began young Timkins as he entered the presence of the dear girl's father, "I want to marry your daughter." "Oh, don't bother me with your troubles!" interrupted the old gentleman. "She told me some time ago that she intended to marry you, so you'll have to settle it between yourselves."—Exchange.

MOTHERS every where praise One Minute Cough Cure for the sufferings it has relieved and the lives of their little ones it has saved. Strikes at the root of the trouble and draws out the inflammation. The children's favorite Cough Cure. T. E. Zimmerman & Co.

Canadian Ears.

In cold countries like Canada the ears are often forced to grow in an unnatural way by the custom of forcing the caps down over the skull and making the ears stick out. It is only American ears which get frostbitten in Canada. The ears of the natives are insured to excessive cold.

A new remedy for biliousness is now on sale at T. E. Zimmerman & Co.'s drug store. It is called Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets. It gives quick relief and will prevent the attack if given as soon as the first indication of the disease appears. Price, 25 cents per box. Samples free.

Described.

Jamestown, Va., where the English gained their first foothold in the new world in 1607, was burned in 1676. To-day nobody lives there. Little remains to mark the site except a crumbling church tower, dilapidated gravestones and remnants of the foundations of a few houses.—Ladies' Home Journal.

When you have no appetite, do not relish your food and feel dull after eating you may know that you need a dose of Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets. Price, 25 cents. Samples free at T. E. Zimmerman & Co.'s drug store.