

raised by fluviatile sediment, as in a delta, a new forest grew up over the ruins of the old one.

I have said that the decay of such timber is slow, for I saw cypresses at Hopeton, which had been purposely killed by girdling or cutting away a ring of bark, which stood erect on the borders of the rice grounds after thirty years, and bid fair to last for many a year to come. It does no small credit to the sagacity of Bartram, the botanist, that he should have remarked, when writing in 1792, that the low, flat islands on the coast, as well as the salt marshes and adjoining sandy region, through which so many rivers wind, and which afford so secure a navigation for schooners, boats, and canoes, may be a step in advance gained by the continent on the Atlantic in modern times. "But if so," he adds, "it is still clear that, at a period immediately preceding, the same region of low land stretched still farther out to sea." On the latter subject his words are so much to the point, as to deserve being quoted:—

"It seems evident, even to demonstration, that those salt marshes adjoining the coast of the main, and the reedy and grassy islands and marshes in the rivers, which are now overflowed at every tide, were formerly high swamps of firm land, affording forests of cypress, tupelo, magnolia grandiflora, oak, ash, sweet bay, and other timber trees, the same as are now growing on the river swamps, whose surface is two feet or more above the spring tides that flow at this day. And it is plainly to be seen by every planter along the coast of Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, to the Mississippi, when they bank in these grassy tide marshes for cultivation, that they can not sink their drains above three or four feet below the surface, before they come to strata of cypress stumps and other trees, as close together as they now grow in the swamps."*

When our canoe had proceeded into the brackish water, where the river banks consisted of marsh land covered with a tall reed-like grass, we came close up to an alligator, about nine feet long, basking in the sun. Had the day been warmer, he would not

* W. Bartram's Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, &c. London, 1792.