

It was the first of these magnificent southern river boats we had seen, fitted up for the two-fold purpose of carrying as many bales of cotton as can be heaped upon them without their sinking, and taking in as many passengers as can enjoy the luxuries which southern manners and a hot climate require, especially spacious cabins, abundance of fresh air, and protection from the heat of the sun. We afterward saw many larger steam vessels, and some of them fitted up in finer style, but none which made such an impression on our minds as the Amaranth. A vessel of such dimensions makes a grand appearance in a river so narrow as the Alabama at Montgomery; whereas, if she were a third longer, she would be comparatively insignificant on the Mississippi. The principal cabins run the whole length of the ship on a deck above that on which the machinery is placed, and where the cotton is piled up. This upper deck is chiefly occupied with a handsome saloon, about 200 feet long, the ladies' cabin at one end, opening into it with folding doors. Sofas, rocking-chairs, tables, and a stove are placed in this room, which is lighted by windows from above. On each side of it is a row of sleeping apartments, each communicating by one door with the saloon, while the other leads out to the guard, as they call it, a long balcony or gallery, covered with a shade or verandah, which passes round the whole boat. The second class, or deck passengers, sleep where they can on the lower floor, where, besides the engine and the cotton, there are prodigious heaps of wood, which are devoured with marvelous rapidity by the furnace, and are as often restored at the different landings, a set of negroes being purposely hired for that work.

These steamers, notwithstanding their size, draw very little water, for they are constructed for rivers which rise and fall very rapidly. They can not quite realize the boast of a western captain, "that he could sail wherever it was damp;" but I was assured that some of them could float in two feet water. The high-pressure steam escapes into the air, by a succession of explosions alternately from the pipes of the two engines. It is a most unearthly sound, like that of some huge monster gasping for breath; and when they clear the boilers of the sediment collected