

when exposed to the air, a fine range of precipices covered with wood forms a picturesque feature in the scenery ; but I obtained the richest harvest of cretaceous fossils far below, at a landing called Prairie Bluff.

The banks of the Alabama, like those of the Savannah and Altamaha rivers, are fringed with canes, over which usually towers the deciduous cypress, covered with much pendent moss. The mistletoe enlivens the boughs of several trees, still out of leaf, and now and then, through an opening in the thicket bordering the river, the evergreen pine-forest appears in the back-ground. Some of the largest trees on the banks are sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis*), called button-wood, one of which I measured, and found it to be eighteen feet in circumference. The old bark is continually peeling off, and the new is as white as if the trunk of the tree had been painted.

When it was growing dusk, and nearly all had retired to their cabins, and some to their beds, we were startled by a loud crash, as if parts of the woodwork of the steamer were giving way over our heads. At the same moment a shower of broken glass came rattling down on the floor of the cabin. As I expected to land in the course of the night at Claiborne, I had not taken off my clothes, so I rushed immediately on deck, and learnt from the captain that there was no danger. I then went down to tell the passengers, especially the women, who were naturally in no small alarm, that all was safe. I found them, in great consternation, crowded together at the door of the ladies' cabin, several mothers with children in their arms. When I returned to see what had happened, a most singular and novel scene presented itself. Crash after crash of broken spars and the ringing of shattered window-glasses were still heard, and the confusion and noise were indescribable. "Don't be alarmed ; we have only got among the trees," said the captain. This, I found, was no uncommon occurrence when these enormous vessels are sweeping down at full speed in the flood season. Strange as it may seem, the higher the waters rise the narrower is the river channel. It is true that the adjoining swamps and low lands are inundated far and wide ; but the steamers must all pass between two rows of tall trees