

yers, the bench has grown weaker than the bar, and the authority of judicial decisions has been impaired. Hence the increased number of appeals to the Supreme Court of the state now sitting at Tuscaloosa. Yet, in spite of this augmentation of business, the income of the judges in this court also has been lowered from 3000 to 2500 dollars; although lawyers in good practice in Mobile have been known to make 10,000 or 14,000 dollars a year. It is by no means uncommon, therefore, for one who has a large family, to give up the bench and return to the bar; but, in that case, the title of Judge is still given to him by courtesy, and is much prized, especially by northern men, who are willing to make a sacrifice for this honor, by serving a few years on the bench and then retiring from it.

I have before alluded to the deep ravines recently cut through incoherent strata in Georgia, after the natural wood has been felled.* One of these modern gulleys may now be seen intersecting most inconveniently the main street of Tuscaloosa, and several torrents are cutting their way backward through the "cretaceous" clay, sand, and gravel of the hill on which the Capitol stands. They even threaten in a few years to undermine that edifice. I had observed other recent ravines, from seventy to eighty feet deep, in the Eocene strata between Macon and Clarksville (Alabama), where the forest had been felled a few years before.

On my way back from Tuscaloosa to Mobile, I had a good opportunity of examining the geological structure of the country, seeing various sections, first of the cretaceous, and then lower down of the tertiary strata. The great beds of gravel and sand above alluded to, forming the inferior part of the cretaceous series, might from their want of consolidation, be mistaken for much newer deposits, if their position on the Tombeckbee, as well as on the Alabama River at Montgomery, were not perfectly clear. They pass beneath the great marlite formation, full of cretaceous shells, which gives rise to the prairie soils before described,† as nearly destitute of natural wood, and crossing Alabama in an east and west direction. These I examined at Erie, at Demo-

* Ante, p. 28.

† Ante, p. 41.