

The storm of the preceding night had driven many sea-gulls up the river, which now followed our steamer, darting down to the water to snatch up pieces of apple or meat, or whatever we threw to them. After passing Fort Jackson, all trees disappeared, except a few low willows. We then entered that long promontory, or tongue of land, if such it can be called, which consists simply of the broad river, flowing between narrow banks, protruded for so many miles into the Gulf of Mexico. Each bank, including the swamps behind it, is about 200 or 300 yards wide, covered with dead reeds, among which we saw many tall, white cranes feeding, as in a flooded meadow, and as conspicuous as sheep. The landscape on either side was precisely similar, and most singular, consisting of blue sky, below which were the dark-green waters of the Gulf, lighted up by a brilliant sun; then the narrow band of swamp, covered with dead reeds, and, in the foreground, a row of pale-green willows, scarcely reflected in the yellow, turbid water of the river. Occasionally large merchant-vessels, some three-masted, were towed up by steam-tugs, through the slack water, near the bank. How the river can thus go to sea as it were, and yet continue for centuries to preserve the same channel, in spite of storms and hurricanes, which have more than once in the last hundred years caused the waters of the Gulf to break over its banks, seems, at first, incomprehensible, till we remember that we have here a powerful body of fresh water flowing in a valley more than a hundred feet deep, with vast mounds of mud and sand on each side, and that the sea immediately adjoining is comparatively shallow.

The growth of willows on that side of the stream where the land is gaining on the water, is often so formal and regular, that they look like an artificial plantation. In the front row are young saplings just rising out of the ground, which is formed of silt, thrown down within the last two or three years. Behind them is an older growth from four to eight feet high. Still farther back is seen a third row twenty-five feet high, and sometimes in this manner five tiers, each overtopping the other, showing the gradual formation of the bank, which inclines upward, because the soil first deposited has been continually raised during