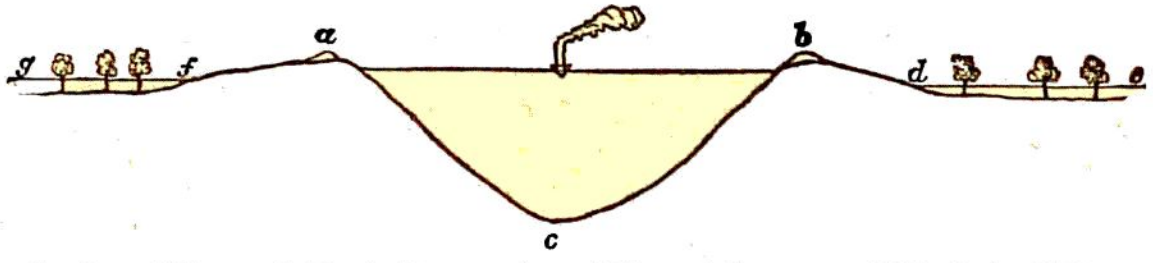
towers of New Orleans in the distance, they should be hurried into a wilderness, and perish there.

I was shown the entrance of what is called the Carthage crevasse, formed in May, 1840, and open for eight weeks, during which time it attained a breadth of eighty feet. Its waters were discharged into Lake Pontchartrain, when nothing was visible between that great lagoon and the Mississippi but the tops of tall cypress trees growing in the morass, and a long, narnarrow, black stripe of earth, being the top of the levee, which marked the course of the river.

The reader may naturally ask why the Mississippi, when it has once burst through its bank, and taken this shorter cut to the sea, does not continue in the same course, reaching the salt water in a few miles instead of flowing two hundred miles before it empties itself into the Gulf. I may remark in reply, that the great river does not run, as might be inferred from the description of some of the old geographers, on the top of a ridge in a level plain, but in a valley from one hundred to two hundred and fifty feet deep.

Fig. 9.



Section of Channel, Bank, Levees (*a* and *b*), and Swamps of Mississippi River.

Thus *a b c* may represent the cavity in which the river flows, the artificial levees at the top of the banks being seen at *a* and *b*. The banks are higher than the bottom of the swamps, *f g* and *d e*; because, when the river overflows, the coarser part of the sediment is deposited at *a* and *b*, where the speed of the current is first checked. It usually runs there with a gentle current among herbage, reeds, and shrubs; and is nearly filtered of its earthy ingredients before it arrives at the swamps. It is probable that the Mississippi flows to the nearest point of the Gulf, where there is a sufficient depth or capacity in the bed of the sea to