

## CHAPTER XXXI.

Fontania near Port Hudson.—Lake Solitude.—Floating Island.—Bony Pike.—Story of the Devil's Swamp.—Embarking by Night in Steamboat.—Literary Clerk.—Old Levees undermined.—Succession of upright buried Trees in Bank.—Raccourci Cut-off.—Bar at Mouth of Red River.—Shelly Fresh-water Loam of Natchez.—Recent Ravines in Table-Land.—Bones of extinct Quadrapeds.—Human Fossil Bone.—Question of supposed co-existence of Man with extinct Mammalia discussed.—Tornado at Natchez.—Society, Country-Houses, and Gardens.—Landslips.—Indian Antiquities.

AFTER I had examined the bluff below Port Hudson, I went down the river in my boat to Fontania, a few miles to the south, to pay a visit to Mr. Faulkner, a proprietor to whom Dr. Carpenter had given me a letter of introduction. He received me with great politeness, and, at my request, accompanied me at once to see a crescent-shaped sheet of water on his estate, called Lake Solitude, evidently an ancient bed of the Mississippi, now deserted. It is one of the few examples of old channels which occur to the east of the great river, the general tendency of which is always to move from west to east. Of this eastward movement there is a striking monument on the other side of the Mississippi immediately opposite Port Hudson, called Fausse Rivière, a sheet of water of the usual horse-shoe form. One of my fellow passengers in the Rainbow had urged me to visit Lake Solitude, "because," said he, "there is a floating island in it, well wooded, on which a friend of mine once landed from a canoe, when, to his surprise, it began to sink with his weight. In great alarm he climbed a cypress tree, which also began immediately to go down with him as fast as he ascended. He mounted higher and higher into its boughs, until at length it ceased to subside, and, looking round, he saw in every direction, for a distance of fifty yards, the whole wood in motion." I wished much to know what foundation there could be for so marvelous a tale. It appears that