

In company with Dr. Dickeson and Colonel Wales, I visited a narrow valley, hollowed out through the shelly loam recently named "the Mammoth ravine," from the fossils found there. Colonel Wiley, a proprietor of that part of the State of Mississippi, who knew the country well before the year 1812, assured me that this ravine, although now seven miles long, and in some parts sixty feet deep, with its numerous ramifications, has been entirely formed since the earthquake. He himself had plowed some of the land exactly over one spot which the gully now traverses.

A considerable sensation was recently caused in the public mind, both in America and Europe, by the announcement of the discovery of a fossil human bone, so associated with the remains of extinct quadrupeds, in "the Mammoth ravine," as to prove that man must have co-existed with the megalonyx and its contemporaries. Dr. Dickeson showed me the bone in question, admitted by all anatomists to be part of a human pelvis, and being a fragment of the *os innominatum*. He felt persuaded that it had been taken out of the clay underlying the loam, in the ravine above alluded to, about six miles from Natchez. I examined the perpendicular cliffs, which bound a part of this water-course, where the loam, unconsolidated as it is, retains its verticality, and found land-shells in great numbers at the depth of about thirty feet from the top. I was informed that the fossil remains of the mammoth (a name commonly applied in the United States to the mastodon) had been obtained, together with the bones of some other extinct mammalia, from below these shells in the undermined cliff. I could not ascertain, however, that the human pelvis had been actually dug out in the presence of a geologist, or any practiced observer, and its position unequivocally ascertained. Like most of the other fossils, it was, I believe, picked up in the bed of the stream, which would simply imply that it had been washed out of the cliffs. But the evidence of the antiquity of the bone depends entirely on the part of the precipice from which it was derived. It was stained black, as if buried in a peaty or vegetable soil, and may have been dislodged from some old Indian grave near the top, in which case it may only have been five, ten, or twenty centuries