

close to the bank, will, in a few years, pass freely over the site of the humble mansion where we had been sleeping; and the geographer, in constructing a map half a century hence, may have to transfer to the State of Kentucky, the spot where I saw a garden flourish.

I examined the perpendicular face of the bank with some interest, as exemplifying the kind of deposits which the Mississippi throws down near its margin. They differ in no way from accumulations of sand and loam of high antiquity with which the geologist is familiar; some beds are made up of horizontal layers, in others they are slanting, or in what is called cross stratification. Some are white, others yellow, and here and there a seam of black carbonaceous matter, derived apparently from the destruction of older strata, is conspicuous.

I next set out on an excursion to examine those districts, where I heard that some superficial effects of the great earthquake of 1811 were still visible. The reader should be reminded that this convulsion occurred contemporaneously with one of the most fatal earthquakes of South America, when the towns of Guayra and Caraccas were laid in ruins. The shocks were also felt in South Carolina. Humboldt has remarked that the shocks of New Madrid are the only examples on record, of the ground having quaked almost incessantly for three months, at a point so far remote from any active volcano. The shocks were most violent in part of the region called the Little Prairie, to the southward of New Madrid, and they extended as far south as the river St. Francis, and, northward, as far as the mouth of the Ohio. Although the country was thinly settled, and most of the houses built of logs, the loss of life was considerable. From accounts published at the time, it appears that the graveyard of New Madrid was precipitated into the Mississippi, the banks of which gave way in many places, and the ground swelled up so that the current of the river flowed backward for a time, carrying several flat boats northward, against the stream. In various parts of the region above alluded to as having been convulsed, lakes twenty miles and upward in extent were formed, while others which pre-existed were drained.\* Hundreds of

\* Silliman's Journal, vol. xv. 1829.