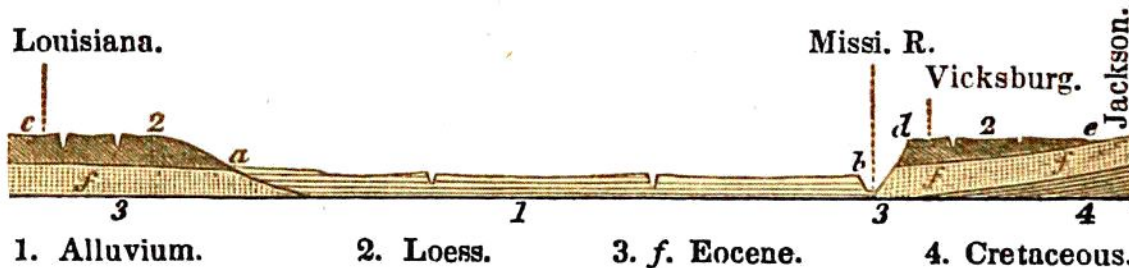


the same age as No. 2, rising from 50 to 200 feet above the level of the sea, constitutes the entire bluffs, forming a table-land like that represented at *d*, *e*. Similar deposits, *a*, *c* (fig. 10), recur in Louisiana, on the western side of the great valley; but they are not, I am informed, denuded so as to present a steep bluff at *a*. They rest equally on Eocene strata, *f* (No. 3).

From what has been said of the species of shells contained in the loam, *d*, *e*, at Natchez, and in other localities, from the remains also of associated terrestrial animals, and from the buried trees of Port Hudson, we have inferred that these deposits (No. 2), are the monuments of an ancient alluvial plain, of an age long anterior to that through which the Mississippi now

Fig. 10.

VALLEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI.



flows, which was inhabited by land and fresh-water mollusca agreeing with those now existing, and by quadrupeds now for the most part extinct.

In my former "Travels in North America," I described some ancient terraces of gravel, sand, and loam, occurring every where in the valley of the Ohio, and gave a section of them as they are seen at Cincinnati.* I pointed out that the included fossil shells demonstrate the fluvial and modern origin of the deposits, and suggested that their present position could only be explained by supposing, first, a gradual sinking down of the land after the original excavation of the valley, during which period the gravel and sand were thrown down, and then an upheaval of the same valley, when the river cut deep channels through the fresh-water beds.† Certain swamp formations observable in

* Travels in North America, fig. 9, vol. ii. p. 59, chap. xvii.

† The second terrace (*c*, fig. 9, *ibid.*) at Cincinnati, may imply a second oscillation.