

snatching up an article of our luggage, while the clerk ushered us over the plank into a brilliantly lighted saloon. The change of scene to travelers who had been roughing it for several days under a humble roof, talking with trappers about the watery wilderness of the "sunk country," and who had just stepped out of a dark half-furnished wharf-boat, was more like the fiction of a fairy tale, than a real incident in an ordinary journey. Some musicians were playing at one end of the room, which was 150 feet long, and a gay young party from New Orleans were dancing a quadrille. At the other end we were delighted to see a table covered with newspapers, for we were nearly a week in arrear of news, and their columns were filled with the recent debates of the English House of Commons. There were also many articles reprinted from the best European periodicals, quarterly and monthly, besides those published in New England and New York. Nor were any of the advantages afforded by this floating palace more like an eastern tale of enchantment, than the thought, as we went to our berths, that before we rose next morning to breakfast we should be transported more than a hundred miles on our route northward against the current of a mighty river.

*March 29.*—Passed Cairo in the night, and next morning were at Smithland on the Ohio, at the mouth of the Cumberland River, having Kentucky on our right hand, and Illinois on the left. Limestone cliffs, bounding the valley, were a welcome sight, after the eye had been dwelling for so many weeks on flat and level regions. Although we had not yet ascended the river to a height of much more than 200 feet above the level of the sea, the climate had changed, and we were told that snow had fallen the day before. We observed that the red-bud, or Judas-tree, was not yet in flower.

On reaching the mouth of the Wabash River, which divides Illinois from Indiana, I learnt that when the ice breaks up there in the spring, it is often packed into such masses that, before melting, they float down with gravel frozen on to them as far as New Madrid. This fact may explain the coarseness of the materials observable in the shoals of the Mississippi, at low water, near Natchez, and still farther down; and may perhaps throw light