

of wide shallow lakes, interlaced by sluggish bayous, and surrounded by interminable marshes, separated at intervals with tracts of higher land along the water-courses. Forts Jack-on and St. Philip stand on the dividing line, between the domain of man and reptiles, for it is just at the head of the vast peninsula of mud, created by the river sediment, and not yet solid enough to bear trees in which the wide current divides itself and seeks the sea by several channels. Above, cultivation begins to be possible; below, only the alligators can find a home. An isolated pilot village—in anchorage of lonesome white houses—has started up at the Balize, and greets the eye like a cluster of lily in a dark marsh; but that is a commercial, not an agricultural growth.

After passing the Forts the "coast" soon becomes salubrious with verdure and beauty. The voices of busy men come from the field, the plantation houses glince brightly out of their bowers of foliage, and every sight and sound is redolent of luxuriant fertility. This "coast" is nevertheless a proverb of fear to the slave. Its sugar plantations accept for their service the stupid, vicious and refractory slave drainage of all the states, and here exists the harshest discipline and the least kindly bonds between slave and master. Yet the negro population thrives more paly under even these disadvantages than in the midst of the free states. They have no heed for the future, and are not loaded with the cares of self-government. Let it be understood that I touch not the justice or injustice of slavery. I deal simply with the facts within my sphere of observation, and leave what is slave my handling to divines and philosophers. The slave population of Louisiana seems to be in that primary stage of development in which the animal nature predominates; and if the animal wants are satisfied, and the feeble mental capacities not overtaxed, they are happy. This whole region is so noxious to white constitutions that it would lie undrained and useless; and we should have to consign altogether the production of sugar and rice, until we had reared in starving poverty a Parisian to undertake it, if we had not a race of African laborers to whom it is more genial. The redemption of five millions of acres, now subject to overflow, but capable of rich returns in rice and sugar, will add immensely to the health and beauty of Louisiana, as well as to the productive wealth of the Union; but under existing circumstances it could only be done by whites at an outlay of life and suffering far beyond all the tucks endure. The acquisition, in 1803, of the Mississippi Valley and its noble highway, doubled the territory of the states, and greatly increased the power and standing of the nation, by giving it the control of the cotton supply in the markets of Europe. This sudden and gigantic step in annexation struck terror into the hearts of all the timid patriots in the Union. They predicted the disruption of such an unwieldy, overgrown republic, and declared it to be impossible to govern and defend such an extent of thinly populated territory. Above all, the anti-slavery men, who were not then a sectional party, but scattered lightly all over the country, north and south, inquired anxiously how the accession of a new twentieth to the number of states was to effect the course of emancipation. Time has answered all these questions.

In 1800 the immense valley, watered by the King of Rivers and his tributaries, had less than four hundred thousand civilized inhabitants—about one-fourteenth part of the population—now it has seven millions, and counts one-third of the votes of the Union. Then the colored population made one-fifth of the whole, now it is reduced to a seventh.