

twenty miles long and four wide. The shells occur in three places as you cross it, and again, on two contiguous hills to the east of it, at the distance of four miles. They do not cover the surface merely. They form a constituent part of the hills or plains in which they are found. Wherever the earth has been washed so as to produce deep gutters, they are seen in greatest abundance. Nor are they petrifications, such as are found in rocks. They have the same appearance as common oyster-shells; they lie loose on the earth, and thus indicate a comparatively recent origin. They occur three hundred miles north-east of Natchez, and but sixty miles south of the Dividing Ridge.

If the country north of Natchez is alluvial, no one will doubt it is so from this place to the Gulf of Mexico. At Baton Rouge, one hundred and forty miles north of New Orleans, you meet the first elevated land in ascending from the Gulf. The banks of the Mississippi are higher than the interior, and would be annually overflowed by the river, but for a narrow embankment of earth about six feet high, called the Levee. By means of this, a narrow strip of land, from half a mile to a mile in width, is redeemed, and cultivated with cotton and the sugar-cane, to the great advantage of the planter. Generally, within one mile from the river, there is an impenetrable morass. The country has every where the appearance of an origin comparatively recent. Not a rock on which you can stand, and no mountain to gladden the eye, you seem to have left the older parts of creation to witness the encroachments which the earth is continually making upon the empire of the sea; and, on arriving at the mouth of the Mississippi, you find the grand instruments of nature in active operation, producing with slow, but certain gradations, the same results.

A destructive Insect.

But I will not enlarge on a fact already familiar. I will ask your further indulgence only, while I communicate an authentic and curious fact for the information of the zoologist.

In the Choctaw country, one hundred and thirty miles north-east of Natchez, a part of the public road is rendered famous on account of the periodical return of a poisonous and destructive fly. Contrary to the custom of other insects, it always appears when the cold weather commences in December, and as invariably disappears on the approach of warm weather, which is about the 1st of April. It is said to have been remarked first in the winter of 1807, during a snow-storm; when its effects upon cattle and horses were observed to be similar to those of the gnat and mosquito, in summer,