

viaduct. On either side, this was flanked by swamps and stagnant lagoons bordered by canebrakes which gave way in turn to forests of cypress trees hung with dark gray streamers of Spanish moss. No animal life thrived except alligators, moccasin snakes, and the pestilential mosquito. An occasional bear came down in search of food, and Indian hunters might follow after. In May, the month of high water, the whole region was inundated and appeared a shoreless sea. As the waters ate into the causeway here and there, the barrier was undermined, the banks caved in, and hundreds and thousands of acres of the richest farm land were swept away down the river. From the time of the French settlement, the necessity of dyking the stream had been the paramount concern of every landowner. Each planter raised an embankment sufficient to guard his fields against flood and strove to make connection with the plantations above and below him. Thus these slave-built levees were gradually extended on both sides the river, forming what was called the "Coast." Here lay the sugar and cotton plantations which constituted the wealth of Louisiana; *e.g.* that of M. Poydras of Point Coupée, employing five hundred slaves and worth \$2,000,000, and that of Wade Hampton, with an annual crop of five hundred hogsheads of sugar and one thousand bales of cotton and worth \$150,000. The income of the ordinary planter was from \$20,000 to \$40,000 a year, and land sold for \$75 an acre, an extraordinary price for the frontier. When Timothy Flint went down the Mississippi in 1822, the levees began at Baton Rouge, one hundred and fifty miles