

mense natural canals winding through this vast valley in every direction, at once irrigating, fertilizing, and connecting its remotest points by navigable water communications. Three of these streams, to wit: the Missouri, the Mississippi, and Arkansas present a continued steam boat navigation of more than two thousand miles in length. Three more, to wit: Red River, the Ohio, and Tennessee have more than a thousand miles. Of those which are actually ascended by steam boats from three to six hundred miles, the number would be too tedious to enumerate.

Each of these streams is a kind of Nile to the region it irrigates, having a wide alluvial valley along its course, bounded on either shore by bluffs of a peculiar character, generally faced with precipitous limestone walls from two to four hundred feet high. It is but a few years since steam boats have first begun to be seen mounting with the power of the imprisoned elements between these hoary and ancient parapets of the streams, scaring the water-fowls from their domain, and the wild beasts from their shores. The discoveries, the peculiar journals and incidents of these long and recent voyages, are too new and voluminous, and we are yet too little acquainted with the new position in which they have placed us, to possess at present all their intrinsic interest. They will constitute the burden of the history and song of the coming generations.

The peculiar configuration, climate, physical character, fertility, and modes of communication of this wide region, circumstances all having a peculiar bearing upon the character of its inhabitants, have not failed to form a language, and mode of thinking, and manners peculiar to the west, presenting to the eye of a curious observer sufficiently amusing differences between the people of the Atlantic country and the Mississippi valley. The long journeys of the inhabitants in steam boats, and by other water conveyances, create the necessity of new phrases, modes of speech, and even habits of thinking and feeling. Among the results may be fairly reckoned greater enterprise, and a readier habit of breaking the ties of home, less pain in doing it, and in general the hardier and more reck-