

being chiefly red, white and black oaks, interspersed with a variety of other trees. The magnolia grandiflora, that infallible sign of the land not being subject to inundation, is not, however, among them. Along the banks a stratum of solid clay, or marl, is observable, apparently of ancient deposition. It lies in oblique positions, making an angle of nearly 30 degrees with the horizon, and generally inclined with the descent of the river, although in a few cases the position was contrary. Timber is seen projecting from under the solid bank, which seems indurated, and unquestionably very ancient, presenting a very different appearance from recently formed soil. The river is about 80 yards wide. A league above the mouth of the Washita, the Bayou Haha comes in unexpectedly from the right, and is one of the many passages through which the waters of the great inundation penetrate and pervade all the low countries, annihilating, for a time, the currents of the lesser rivers in the neighborhood of the Mississippi. The vegetation is remarkably vigorous along the alluvial banks, which are covered with a thick shrubbery, and innumerable plants in full blossom at this late season.

Villemont's prairie is so named in consequence of its being included within a grant under the French government to a gentleman of that name. Many other parts of the Washita are named after their early proprietors. The French people projected and began extensive settlements on this river; but the general massacre planned, and in part executed by the Indians against them, and the consequent destruction of the Natchez tribe by the French, broke up all these undertakings, and they were not recommenced under that government. Those prairies are plains, or savannas, without timber; generally very fertile, and producing an exuberance of strong, thick and coarse herbage. When a piece of ground has once got into this state in an Indian country, it can have no opportunity of reproducing timber, it being an invariable practice to set fire to the dry grass in the fall or winter, to attain the advantage of attacking game when the young tender grass begins to spring; this destroys the young timber, and the prairie annually gains upon the wood-land. It is probable that the immense plains known to exist in America, may owe their origin to this custom. The plains of the Washita lie chiefly on the east side, and being generally formed like the Mississippi land, sloping from the bank of the river to the great river, they are more or less subject to inundation in the rear; and in certain great floods the water has advanced so far as to be ready to pour over the margin into the Washita. This has now become a very rare thing, and it may be estimated that from a quarter of a mile to a mile in depth, will remain free from inundation during high floods. This is pretty much the case with those lands nearly as high as the post of the Washita, with the exception of certain ridges of primitive high-land: the rest being evidently alluvial, although not now subject to be inundated by the Washita river, in consequence of the great depth which the bed of the river has acquired by abrasion. On approaching towards the Bayou Louis, which empties its waters into the Washita on the right, a little below the rapids, there is a great deal of high land on both sides, which produces pine and other timber, not

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