from a recent system of American geography, as the author must have had several opportunities of being well informed.

'The Mississippi receives the waters of the Ohio and Illinois, and their numerous branches from the east; and of the Missouri, and other rivers, from the west. These mighty streams united are borne down with increasing majesty, through vast forests and meadows, and discharged into the gulf of Mexico. The great length and uncommon depth of this river, says Mr. Hutchins, and the excessive muddiness and salubrious quality of its waters after its junction with the Missouri, are very singular. The direction of the channel is so crooked, that from New Orleans to the mouth of the Ohio, a distance which does not exceed 460 miles in a straight line, is about 856 by water. It may be shortened at least 250 miles, by cutting across eight or ten necks of land, some of which are not thirty yards wide. Charlevoix relates that in the year 1722, at Point Coupée, or Cut Point, the river made a great turn; and some Canadians, by deepening the channel of a small brook, diverted the waters of the river into it. The impetuosity of the stream was so violent, and the soil of so rich and loose a quality, that in a short time the point was entirely cut through, and travellers saved fourteen leagues of their voyage. The old bed has no water in it, the times of the periodical overflowings only excepted. The new channel has been since sounded with a line of thirty fathoms, without finding bottom. Several other points of great extent have, in like manner, been since cut off, and the river diverted into new channels.

'In the spring floods the Mississippi is very high, and the current so strong, that it is with difficulty it can be ascended; but this disadvantage is remedied in some measure by eddies, or counter currents, which are generally found in the bends close to the banks of the river, and assist the ascending boats. The current at this season descends at the rate of about five miles an hour. In autumn, when the waters are low, it does not run faster than two miles: but it is rapid in such parts of the river as have clusters of islands, shoals, and sand banks. The circumference of many of these shoals being several miles, the voyage is longer, and in some parts more dangerous, than in the spring. The merchandise necessary for the commerce of the Upper Settlements, on or near the Mississippi, is conveyed in the spring and autumn, in batteaux, rowed by eighteen or twenty men, and carrying about forty tons. From New Orleans to the Illinois the voyage is commonly performed in eight or ten weeks. A prodigious number of islands, some of which are of great extent, intersperse that mighty river. Its waters, after overflowing its banks below the river Ibberville on the east, and the river Rouge on the west, never return within them again, there being many outlets or streams by which they are conducted into the bay of Mexico, more especially on the west side of the Mississippi, dividing the country into numerous islands. These singularities distinguish it from every other known river in the world. Below the Ibberville the land begins to be very low on both sides of the river, across the country; and gradually declines as it approaches nearer to the sea. The island of New Orleans, and the lands opposite, are to all appearance of no long date, for in digging ever so little below the surface you find water, and great quantities of trees. The many beaches and breakers, as well as inlets, which have arisen out of the channel, within the last half century, at the several mouths of the river, are convincing proofs that this peninsula was wholly formed in the same manner. And it is certain that when La Salle sailed down the Mississippi to the sea, the opening of that river was very different from what it is at present.

'The nearer you approach the sea this truth becomes more striking. The bars that cross most of these small channels, opened by the current, have been multiplied by means of the trees carried down with the streams; one of which, stopped by its roots or branches in a shallow part, is sufficient to obstruct the passage of thousands more, and to fix them at the same place. Astonishing collections of trees are daily seen in passing between the Balize and the Missouri. No human force is sufficient to remove them, and the mud carried down by the river serves to bind and cement them together. They are gradually covered, and every inundation not only extends their length and breadth, but adds another layer to their height. In less than ten years time canes, shrubs, and aquatic timber, grow on them; and form points and islands which forcibly shift the bed of the river.