

# DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

**D** ID you ever make the trip in a big steamer plying between St. Louis and New Orleans? The height of the season of 1897 has seen the usual pilgrimage of tourists, and the belles and beaux of many a river town have crowded the decks and staterooms of the soft-moving boats that float out from some city wharf, and drop anchor only after many days,



THE CAPTAIN.

1,250 miles away. At the very outset it is interesting to watch the roustabouts, tumbling over each other in the haste engendered by the hoarse voice of the mate, loading merchandise found for Southern ports. They are a curious study—these roustabouts—with their half-clad, powerful figures, their song-cry of "leave-he ho-o!" their jog-trot shuffle, and the reckless abandon with which their work is done. They have no cares. If they have any ambition it is to get the big steamer out of port, lie lazily on the lower decks, or play "craps," or sit and watch the white foam of the river as the boat plunges forward on its way.

When the last barrel, box and trunk is bestowed the big bell gives three taps, the captain, from the hurricane deck, shouts "Let her go, there!" the gangplanks are pulled in, the prow of the great steamer swings out and with a wide turn starts on its delightful pilgrimage. The captain is the patriarch and hero of the expedition. You can hear his big voice at all hours of the night, sometimes over your head, when he stands sentinal to see that all goes well; sometimes from the lower deck, where his vigorous and secular Anglo-Saxon arouses the mate and his roustabouts to duties engendered by new conditions; and oftener on the promenade deck, where he talks politics with the men and relates the history of each point of interest, a history which he has come to believe is faithful by reason of its repetition. Nobody knows



DANCE ON AN EXCURSION STEAMER.

when or where the captain sleeps. The cheerful buzz of his voice reaches your stateroom in the still night, and you drop off to sleep wondering if the captain ever does retire. When you wake in the morning there is the captain again, freshly-shaven, clean, bright and cheerful as ever, with an appetite for breakfast that only equals your own.

While the Nile has been rolling along for ages in the same channel, the Mississippi has been roaming all over its valley, twisting hither and thither, building up banks and then cutting through them and suddenly abandoning the old channel for a new one. It is doing the same thing to-day. The vast length of the Mississippi and its tributaries, measuring 9,000 miles of navigable waters and draining an area of 1,244,000 square miles, must account in a large part for the great quantity of matter it cuts away, but even when these facts are considered the estimate must still appear enormous. It is stated by experts that the dirt carried down by the Mississippi in a single year amounts to a solid mass one mile square and 163 feet deep. This sediment is being constantly deposited along the shores and upon the bars and islands that abound in this remarkable stream.

The atmosphere of lazy floating days, on board a steamer, crammed full of unusual scenes, flashes of excitement,

grand and bewildering vistas of field and flood and verdure-clad hills, in which the beauties of the Hudson are duplicated, reproduced and excelled with enough scenic luxuriance to create a score of Hudson Rivers, cannot be expressed or indicated upon a newspaper page. It is altogether unique, and most of the people in this great, bustling country will never be able to enjoy the sensation in proper person.

The rafting industry is exclusive. It is not carried on before a grand stand or in the presence of a multitude. Its secrets are all its own, and one of these days the material exhausted, this industry will disappear with all of its traditions and romances, and with it will vanish from view the river types, the sturdy logger, the peculiarly northern roustabout or "rooster" as he is familiarly known, and the rugged captans who embody all the river lore and are walking encyclopedias of every thing that belongs to the history of this great stream since the first Canadian voyagers and hardy French woodsmen penetrated these wilds.

One of these rafting steamers is a sight to see. It keeps its bows against the rear end of a mighty fabric of logs, in a position to push it down stream. A second steamer, smaller in size, is fastened transversely across the front end or bow of the raft, and is pushed along,

revolutions of its wheel pushes the front end of the raft away from a dangerous bank, and by backing water the head of the raft is dragged back into the channel away from threatening shoals.

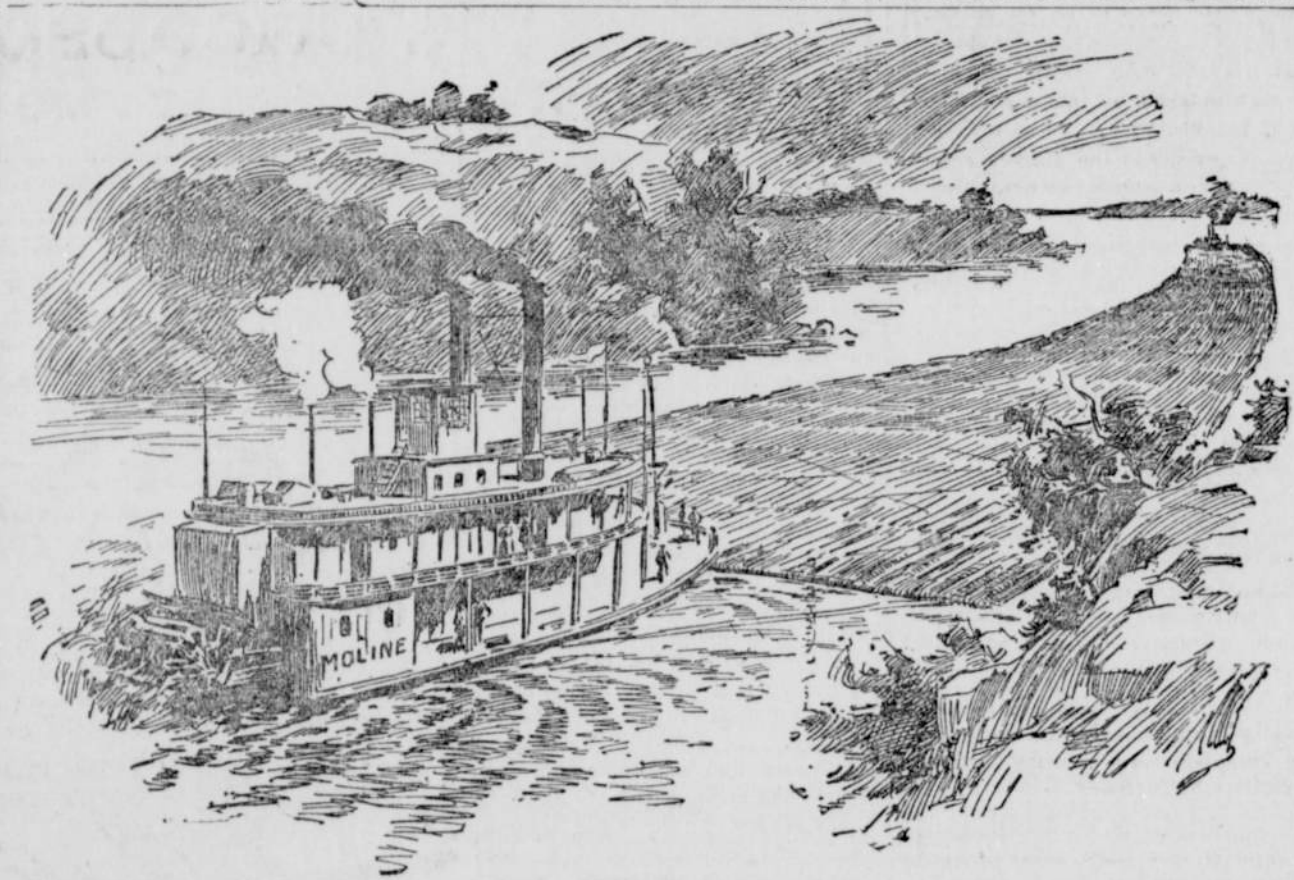
The difficulties of turning and twisting an invertebrate mass of logs in narrow and tortuous channels will be better appreciated when the actual size



TYPES ON A MISSISSIPPI RIVER EXCURSION.

of the raft is understood. In length it is 1,200 feet, and thus equal to several average city blocks, and its width is almost 300 feet. More than half the raft is double decked, meaning that it is composed of two layers of logs, and it is estimated that not less than 10,000 logs are included within its booms, a

great trouble in finding a furnace suitable for burning it. It is now blown by steam into a special furnace, on the principle of the Lucigen light, and used without difficulty. It is 40 or 50 per cent. cheaper than coal, and is 20 per cent. better as a heat raiser. Steam can be got up quicker and kept at a higher pressure and more work be done by the machinery. From a



RAFTING ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

quiet and unresisting, with its wheel motionless, as a sort of cut water for the unwieldy expanse of logs. But this is not its mission. A telephone connection is established between the two steamers by means of wires stretched across the raft, and as the rear steamer

number sufficient to yield more than 2,000,000 feet of lumber. Scores of freight trains would be required to transport the members of this inarticulate leviathan, whose weight is almost beyond computation.

The passenger on a Mississippi River steamer is expected to spend most of the day in good weather on the promenade deck, with field or opera glass in hand, viewing the delightful scenery.

About the third day one begins to take interest in the landings. You want to know how long the boat will stop at the next town, and whether you can run up into the city and "stretch your legs." You try it once or twice, only to find that the Captain has hurried your return by a vigorous pull on the bell. This is one of the Captain's little jokes. He doesn't mean it, and as you wipe the perspiration from your brow he tells you how many points of interest you might have seen if only you had not foolishly run back to the boat.

The old days of the passenger steamer industry are a vivid memory with every river veteran—the high gambling days, those when every inch of steam was put to the danger point in a race between two stately flowing palaces. There is still lingering reminiscence here and there, suggestions of those brilliant, exciting hours, when life was a reckless whirl for the deck hand, and a thrilling experience for the passenger on a typical steamer. The gamblers, the grotesque dancers, the singing roustabouts, are nearly all gone, but the odd characters who have furnished themes for many a captivating story still haunt the landing places that one passes in a trip down the Mississippi River.

#### Immigration Figures.

The highest immigration record, excluding the arrivals of aliens not so classified, is that of 1882, when the prodigious number of 788,962 came, following the previous year's 699,431, till then unprecedented. In 1883 there was a heavy falling off to 603,322, and the decrease went on until 334,203 was reached in 1886. Then the tide again turned, and with some variations another climax was reached in 1892, when the figures were 623,084, the third highest mark, and not far behind that of 1881. But then began another ebb, with 502,917 in 1893, followed by 314,467, then 279,498, then by 343,267, and now this year by an astonishing reduction to 230,832, as shown by a special bulletin of the Treasury Department.

#### Substitute for Coal.

In the future we may be importing masut instead of exporting coal. Masut is a by-product in the distillation of raw petroleum. It is also manufactured from a cheap, brown coal found in Saxony. There has been, until recent-

ly, great trouble in finding a furnace suitable for burning it. It is now blown by steam into a special furnace, on the principle of the Lucigen light, and used without difficulty. It is 40 or 50 per cent. cheaper than coal, and is 20 per cent. better as a heat raiser. Steam can be got up quicker and kept at a higher pressure and more work be done by the machinery. From a

naval point of view these are vitally important facts. No sign of a ship under full steam will be shown in the sky, for masut is a smokeless fuel. Russia and Italy are using it in their navies, and Germany has lately made some valuable experiments. At Kiel, Wilhelmshaven and Danzig are tanks

from which it can be pumped into ships. Its specific gravity being so much less than that of coal, a ship's buoyancy is greatly increased when the bunkers are filled with it. Heavier armor or cargoes can be carried. The heating capacity being greater, the ship can travel faster or farther. It is yet to be learned what improvements the Germans have introduced into their furnaces and what are the disadvantages of masut.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

**Perfume from Living Plants.**

Capt. Snee has discovered a method of gathering the scent of flowers as the plant is growing. He takes a glass funnel and heats the thin end over a spirit lamp. He then draws out the stem to a fine point. This accomplished, the funnel is filled with ice and placed on a retort stand, the pointed end being placed in a small glass bottle, without touching it. After this, the stand and the funnel are placed in a greenhouse, among the flowers whose odors it is desired to collect. Gradually the vapor rises from the flowers, and, in meeting the colder surface of the funnel, condenses into drops on the outside of the glass. From the point of condensation it trickles down until it drops into the bottle. In a surprisingly short time a large amount of perfume is collected, and it is claimed that 90 per cent. of the contents of the bottle is perfume; the rest is water. Strange to say, this essence of the flower needs to be adulterated with spirits of wine. Otherwise it would become sour and useless.—American Cultivator.

**It Has Cost Millions.**

The most expensive book ever published in the world is the official history of the war of the rebellion, which is now being issued by the United States Government at a cost up to date of \$2,300,000. Of this amount nearly one-half has been paid for printing and binding, the remainder to be accounted for in salaries, rent, stationery and miscellaneous expenses, including the purchase of records from private individuals. In all probability it will take three years to complete the work, and an appropriation of \$500,000 has been asked, making a total cost of nearly \$3,000,000. The work will consist of 112 volumes.

Ferguson—it says here that no foreigner is allowed to be forty-eight hours on Turkish territory without a pass. Nixon—it must be tough on the railroads that have to issue them.—Boston Transcript.

A man gets very little credit for what he does in this world, but he gets lots of blame for what he doesn't.

A woman has to purse up her lips in order to carry car fare in her mouth.

#### "ELDER" SAM PRYOR.

He's Been Preaching for 51 Years, and Shows No Signs of Stopping.

Born in the eighteenth century, sixty years a slave, fifty years the husband of a slave woman, thirty-four years the husband of a free woman who was once a slave, and eighty-one years a preacher of the Gospel. These are some of the experiences which one man, and only one man in the world, has undergone. That man is "Elder" Sam Pryor, who lives in Limestone County, Alabama, about twenty-five miles from Huntsville.

Elder Sam, or "Uncle Sam," as he is affectionately called by his "white folks," was born in Albemarle County, Virginia, Jan. 1, 1795. His first master



"ELDER" SAM PRYOR.

was Capt. John H. Harris, who served in the Revolutionary war. His young mistress, Isabella, married Capt. Luke Pryor, a lawyer of Athens, Ala., who still lives at that place, and is between 80 and 90 years of age. Sam was given to her upon the occasion of her marriage, and thus became a Pryor.

Elder Sam lives upon the Pryor place and is a great favorite with the family. He has been preaching the Gospel over eighty-one years, and is a Baptist missionary. When asked how he came to be a preacher, he said that he received a call from the Lord eighty-one years ago the second Sunday of last May.

"But how did you know that you were called?"

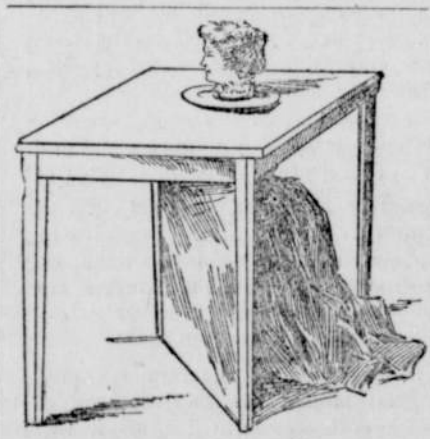
"When God converts a man he knows it," was the reply, "and when he calls a man to preach the Gospel he knows it."

The old man continued: "God wants religion dat de water can't quench and de fire can't quench; jes like ef you put down dat hat an' hit go through de fire an' come out jes' like it is—ain't burnt up—dat's a hat. Dat's de way God wants a Christian to be."

#### FAMILIAR TRICK EXPLAINED.

How the Talking Head Upon the Table Is Arranged.

One of the most familiar optical tricks is the talking head upon a table. The illustration almost explains itself. The apparatus consists of a mirror fixed to the diagonally opposite legs of the table. The mirror hides the body of the girl and by reflection makes a fourth table leg appear. It



SHE IS HIDDEN BY THE MIRROR.

also reflects the end of the fabric hanging down in front of the table and makes it seem as if part of the cloth were also hanging over the rear end of the table. Then, too, the mirror reflects the floor so that the spectator seems to be looking right under the table and thinks he can see the floor beyond it. The girl's head is thrust through a hole in the table. Curiously enough, the effect is more perfect when the spectator is quite near.

#### The Head Waitress.

The head waitress is beginning to rival the proverbial theological student in the dining-rooms of New England hotels. She occasionally appears in New Jersey. In a noted hostelry in the Berkshire hills the long dining-room acknowledges the benignant sway of the head waitress. Clothed entirely in black, with only a line of white at throat and wrists, her costume is differentiated from the uniform of her troop of assistants. All the other waitresses are in white duck or pique, stiffly starched (no flimsy organdies or Victorian lawn used).

Along the long wall of the dining-room is a row of well-separated high stools. There is one by each table, and on this the waitress is perched when not attending to her table. It looks odd at first to see them perched up high when not on duty, but hotel guests are not always punctual at coming to meals, and the arrangement is thoroughly humane. The height of the seat and its position prevent what would appear as a breach of etiquette did the waitress take one of the table chairs. The fashion introduced is a sensible innovation.—Philadelphia Record.

#### Fair Play.

That is a suggestive "strike story" which comes from a Western State, whose leading industry has of late been seriously imperiled. One employer's hands refused to "go out" when others did. "No," they said; "we believe the

boss has paid us all he could afford. Anyhow, he's always treated us as though we were men. His wife and daughter have been good friends to our womenfolks, too. They've done the fair thing by us, all around, and we won't go back on 'em."

Here shines out that spirit of brotherhood which, if permitted to have its way with men, will preserve the nation. "At the heart of the whole social problem," a wise writer has said, "is the quiet, homely personal service whereby one helps another. No legislation, no shortening of hours no lengthening of pay-rolls, no improvement of houses nor lessening of rents no establishment of the 'co-operative commonwealth,' will make much better a situation which sorely needs bettering, without this individual effort. When every privileged family is ministering in some direct way to some other family less privileged, then the social millennium will begin to dawn."

#### KLONDIKE THORNS.

Entangling Vines Which Torture Weary Wayfarers.

H. Juneau, of Dodge City, Kan., who, with his brother, Joseph Juneau, founded the town of Juneau, Alaska, now counted as the leading citizen of the famous territory, has an interesting story to tell of the dark side of life on the Upper Yukon. Mr. Juneau spent several years in Alaska, and helped lay out the streets of the town which now bears his name.

In speaking of his early experience in Alaska, Mr. Juneau said:

"I helped lay out the town in 1881, and have been there several times since. We first named the place Harriburg, but the people changed the name after a year or two. I have found the country full of disappointments, and I don't want to paint the picture too bright. Enough has not been said of the dark side.

"It is no place for men of weak constitution. The hardships to be encountered require the strongest hearts and sinews, as well.

"I have seen nothing published of the fact that a large portion of the country is covered with a moss and vine which contains sharp thorns, like porcupine quills, with saw edges. These will penetrate leather boots, and when once in the flesh nothing but a knife will remove them. These are worse than the mosquito pest.

"Along the sea coast Alaska presents a grand and picturesque view for miles in extent, from an ocean steamer. It is a good idea to get acquainted with Alaska and enjoy its scenery. It is a grand country to visit, and its scenery surpasses any mountain scenery in the world. Travel on water can be provided for in comfort, and be enjoyed without great risk or danger.

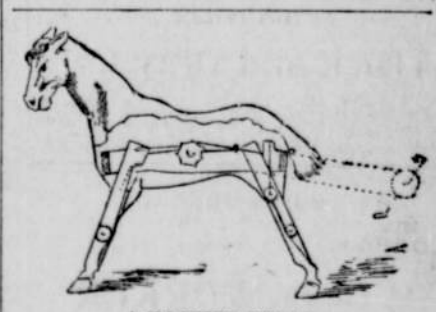
"Alaska is a country on edge. It is so mountainous. Basins are mainly filled with ice. The weather is always hard in great extremes. When there is no ice there is moss and devil's club, the latter a vine that winds about everything it can clutch. Persons walking become entwined in a network of moss and devil's club, and passage is extremely difficult and 'torturous,' as well as tortuous."—Detroit Free Press.

#### The King's Mistake.

Evidently the King of Siam is still a good deal of a barbarian. If he had profited as much by European instruction as we have been told, he never would have given such an absurd excuse as he has for deferring his visit to the United States. It would take, he says, six months at least to get an intelligent idea of America and Americans, and, as he has only a few weeks more to spare from affairs of state, he is going to wait until he has more leisure! This will disgrace Chulalongkorn all over Europe, and ruin his laboriously acquired popularity. Any British, French or German traveler would have told him that from three to six weeks here would enable a man of ordinary intelligence to know us inside and out and set down the conclusion of the whole matter in a big book. Haven't they done it time and again, and aren't they men of ordinary, very ordinary, intelligence?—New York Times.

#### Travels Like a Re I Horse.

People are still at work inventing queer devices. A Detroit man has invented and patented a mechanical horse which he designed to be propelled by a pedal chain arrangement. This extends back to the carriage, which the horse draws after it, covering the



A MACHINE STEED.

ground with a lifelike motion of the legs. The gait is said to be very natural and true to life.

#### Of Course.

"And so Dr. Cutting, the eminent appendicitis expert, is dead? Dear! dear! That's a severe loss to our community. What was the matter with him?"

"He swallowed a peachstone, and it got stuck somewhere."—Cleveland Plaindealer.

#### Told the Truth.

"See here. That horse you sold me runs away, kicks, bites, strikes and tries to tear down the stable at night. You told me that if I got him once I wouldn't part with him for \$1,000."

"Well, you won't."—Detroit Free Press.

A woman who loves her husband never attempts any explanation of why she married him.