

MISCELLANEOUS

Have you ever heard of the Mississippi swamp? Drones you have; but if you have not, you will be compelled to take that region in your winter, "pry that you might be in its winter."

Me one who over gets through safe in that season of the year, but will reward receive no travel, it again. I am not going to describe it. I give that up. I am only going to plunge into its tangled, crooked, and its most intricate, to remain for several weeks.

The word "swamp," as used in this State, not always implies a swampy pool of stagnant water, but is generally applied to all those low grounds which suffer annual or occasional overflow. These swamps are more gloomy, the timber here, the swamps more inaccessible, and in general more rich than the adjacent and higher country.

We will now take a trip down the "Swamp," a large tributary of the Ouachita, emptying into the latter near the southern line of the State, and passing along a great geographical accuracy, we describe the Saline river as having its sources in the body of mountains known as the Saline Mountains, and where the great Saline road to the east crosses, is about 100 yards wide.

To avoid the trouble of packing and repacking our portage, it was necessary to construct a narrow gauge of iron rails, about a hundred miles of so—launching out one warm May day, we shot down stream, with a good many people on each side. The novelty of the thing was pleasing to us, and we went through the bending willows, and swept along arches of birch and cotton-wood trees, which, meeting at top, constantly seemed to form a canopy over us, we congratulated ourselves on our improved mode of travelling.

In certain places the river would wind to about four miles in other words, winding with the speed of an arrow, spreading out into a still and lake-like stream, we moved slowly on the water, and the banks were so high and so waterily, while the flowers floated on top like so many silver spears. Occasionally we would anchor on an overhanging log or branching bough, and making camp on the large and mossy rocky looking moccasins, which lay all over, looking at us with bright and motionless eyes as we gazed by them.

Somehow, however, the more difficult it became to proceed, and the romance of the thing had altogether disappeared from us. So crooked was the stream, and so the distance of ten miles would make more than three in a direct line; and huge trunks of trees falling completely across the stream, formed so many obstructions, that it was necessary to abandon the attempt of passing down the stream, as we knew not into what unknown wilderness we were then going.

Picking our tent upon the banks, we arranged our provisions and clothing, and as well as we could, prepared for our night's rest. As we lay on the ground, when whole army of foot soldiers, I presume, by the smell of the provisions, made a descent upon our camp, and commenced carrying off our provisions, which had been cut into small pieces for the greater convenience of carriage. We made a charge upon them, and succeeded in routing the enemy, who were then about twelve in number. A large asycaron tree in the neighborhood afforded them a hiding place. The "wrest" up, tried to escape, and the chase followed by the arms of the stream, in the dark and solitary recesses of this place were numerous bears and wolves, as it was a spot seldom visited except when some deer hunter planned to go there to seek their favorite game.

On our return to camp, the party left behind had heard the sound of an axe in a southern cove, so next day, early while the brilliant dew drops were yet hanging on the leaves, and trying our buckhorn leggings more closely, we started off to explore the country in a southerly direction. Leaving the main camp, we always more than thirty covers with undergrowth than the upland, we entered open pine woods, and at the distance of about two miles from camp, we struck a trail which bore east and west. Turning to the eastward, we joyfully followed it, until we struck the river again, just below a saw and grist mill, which was in full operation, and which the main camp was with the most welcome sound to our ears.

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