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Western Scenery: Extract of a Letter from a Western Traveller

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spurring to the top of an Indian barrow, placed himself and me at the desired point of view.

We were on the spot that overlooks the confluence of Salt River with the Mississippi. Having once travelled an hundred miles to see the Natural Bridge, and having heard from Mr. Jefferson that that sight was worthy of a voyage across the Atlantic, I certainly did not grudge the price I had paid for the view that opened on me.

The confluence of the rivers is nearly at right angles. The hill descends with equal abruptness towards each, and, at first glance, the apex seems to overhang the water of each. But this is not so. The descent, perhaps, wants two or three degrees of perpendicularity, and, at the bottom, there is a narrow border of low-ground, fringing the banks with lofty trees. The appearance of these trees gave the only measure of the height of the hill. To the eye they might be bushes. My guide assured me they were of the tallest growth.

To the East, across the Mississippi, lay what is called *Howard's bottom*. This is, as its name imports, a body of low ground. Its width is said to be, in some places, not less than six miles, and to be nearly uniform for a distance of sixty. Of this I could not judge. It seemed that it might be so. I was nearly opposite the middle of it, and overlooking the whole. Next the water was a border of the most luxuriant forest, apparently some half a mile in width, and beyond this, a Prairie reaching to the foot of the hills, interspersed with masses of forest, and groves, and stumps, and single trees, among which, here and there, were glittering glimpses of the *Chenaille ceartee*, which traverses the whole length of it. You, who know the vesture in which nature clothes these fertile plains, need not be told how rich and soft was the beautiful picture thus spread beneath my feet. Its *setting* was not less remarkable. This was a perpendicular wall of limestone, two or three hundred feet high, which bounds the valley on the East. An occasional gap, affording an outlet to the country beyond, alone broke the continuity of this barrier. To the North, lay the extensive plain through which Salt River winds. I have no idea of its extent. It is a vast amphitheatre, surrounded by lofty and richly-wooded hills. The plain itself is of wood and Prairie interspersed, and so blended, that every tree seems placed for effect.

You are not to suppose, because I do not launch out in florid declamation about the beauty, and grandeur, and magnificence, and all that, of this scene, that it was less striking than you would naturally suppose it must be. You know that I have neither talent nor taste for *fine writing*, so you must take the picture as I give it, and draw on your own imagination for the garniture. I have said nothing of the rivers, but to tell you they were there, and flowing through a landscape of many hundred thousand acres of the richest land on earth, with the most beautifully variegated surface, all spread out under my feet. I felt that the scene was sublime; and it is well for your patience, that I have learned that *sublime things are best described in fewest words*. It is certainly the finest I ever saw. There may be others equal to it, but the earth does not afford room for many such. What will it be, when it becomes "a living landscape of groves and corn-fields, and the abodes of men?" As it is, if the warrior, on whose tomb I stood, could raise his head, he would see it in nothing changed from what it was when his last sun set upon it.

For the Southern Literary Messenger.

WESTERN SCENERY.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A WESTERN TRAVELLER.

We had rode about a mile, when my guide said, that if I was willing to go a hundred yards out of the way, he could show me something worth seeing. I no sooner assented to this, than he cast around him his keen woodsman's glance, and then, turning his horse in a direction slightly diverging from the road, struck into the woods. I followed, and presently observed that we were pursuing a course nearly parallel to what seemed to be a precipice, beyond the verge of which I caught glimpses of a vast extent of country. Without allowing me time to see any thing distinctly, my guide pushed on, and,