

The Picturesque Tennessee

The Tennessee River is the sixth largest in size, and third in national importance in the United States. If viewed from a picturesque standpoint, it will be found to rank far above many of our rivers famous for their beautiful scenery; probably unrivaled in this respect by few, if any, navigable rivers in the world.

In descending this river, soon after leaving Chattanooga, we find ourselves hemmed in by vast and lofty mountains. Lookout Mountain, in our rear, towers heavenward, while at its base in graceful bends, the river flows silently. Here the scene presented is one of grandeur and reaches the magnificent a few miles on. High to the right and to the left, nature's solid masonry is seen; the mountainsides from the water's edge rise almost perpendicularly into the clouds, with here and there a rugged cliff or deep resounding cavern.

At one point the river channel is very narrow, affording room for only one boat pass at a time. Leaving the gorge, for many miles a panorama of ever-changing and enchanting views presents itself. Densely wooded hills that have seldom known the sound of the white man's voice, peaceful sunlit villages, rich with fragrant flowers, turbulent mountain streams fed from purest springs, rush madly down to meet this beautiful river. We see no artificial beauty, but as nature made it, and as it has existed century after century wild – grand - imposing.

From Bridgeport on to Muscle Shoals there are many objects of interest. In our path looms up, presenting a solid front of rock; rocks as large as an ordinary house, and of every color imaginable; at first sight appearing as though it were "hand-painted," but on closer examination it will be found to surpass in beauty any thing that man is capable of producing. It justly deserves its name "paint-rock."

Honey Comb Mountain still further on attracts the eye of the traveler. The washing of the water, age after age, has punctured its side with hundreds of caves and caverns, some so small that with difficulty they are seen from mid-river, while others are large enough to admit the boat's yawl.

Deposit Rock too presents an interesting as well as beautiful sight. High on the bank to our right is in immense rock, which tradition says is where Genl. Jackson during the Indian War, assembled his troops, and deposited his arms before crossing the river. This was, no doubt, the first and last "Bank of Deposit" this section has ever known. At Muscle Shoals the river, at places is nearly 2 miles wide, and with its hundred or more Islands is the grandest scene of all, for

"Here it comes sparkling,
And there it lies darkling;
Now smoking and frothing

Its tumult and wrath in,
Till, in this rapid race
On which it is bent,
It reaches the place
of its steep descent

Smiting and fighting,
A site to delight in.”

James E Mooney

Cin Literary Club
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Theo Kemper Editor