

TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

Central Texas

TEXAS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

INDIAN TRIBES.

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This can only be accounted for by supposing that the mountains which now raise their summits in gloomy grandeur over the prairies, were once the boundary of the ocean. Shark's teeth and other fossil remains of marine fish have frequently been picked up in the bed of the Colorado river.

In the spring and early part of the summer, the prairies are covered with a thousand varieties of wild flowers, which fill the air with fragrance, and present one of the loveliest prospects in nature.

Four miles above the city, upon the east side of the river, is a high peak, called Mount Bonnell. From the top of the mountain there is a perpendicular precipice of seven hundred feet down to the water. The prospect from the top of this mountain, is one of the grandest and loveliest in nature. On the north and west extend the mountain peaks, rising in bold magnificence hill above hill, for a distance of twenty miles. And though what are here called mountains, would in many countries be looked upon as inconsiderable hills, they form a bold contrast to the flower clad prairie, which stretches off to the south and east as far as the eye can extend. The Colorado river is seen for the distance of fifteen miles winding its course among the hills and rich valleys; below us is the infant city, which completes the prospect and renders it one of the loveliest upon earth.

The mountains contain immense quarries of gray and blue limestone, white, gray, and variegated marble, and granite and gypsum, and stone coal. They contain an inexhaustible supply of

iron ore—gold, copper, and lead have been found, but no examination into their wealth has been made. Upon the tops of the mountains are frequently large tracts of rich table lands, and the valleys are unsurpassed in fertility by any land in the world. Large springs, many of which would afford five or six hundred barrels of water a minute, are bursting out at the foot of the mountains and watering the rich valleys below. Some portions of the hills are very well timbered—others are prairie. The musquit grass* extends to the top of the hills, while the valleys are covered with wild rye. It is not surpassed by any country in the world for cattle and hogs.

Three miles above Austin are the first falls—they are mere rapids of about ten feet in one hundred yards.

There has been a great difference of opinion about the navigation of the Colorado river. Some are of opinion there will be no difficulty at all in navigating it to Austin, while others think that it can never be effected. A partial examination has been made of it, and two feet water can be had over the shallowest bar at the lowest stage of the water. Iron boats have been constructed in Europe, of two hundred tons burthen, which draw but seven inches water: it does appear that a boat of this description ought

* Musquit grass is a very fine grass, which grows very thick upon the ground, and affords the finest pasture of any grass upon earth. There is a species of locust which is called musquit timber, from its generally growing upon musquit prairies—it is harder and more durable than the black locust, but generally grows crooked and scrubby.