

next, and last of all, are put on what are called the "spring-poles," being a couple of pieces of hemlock poles, some 20 feet in length, and 6 or 8 inches thick—the forward end inserted under the outward corner of the head-block, brought back over a bit of wood for a fulcrum, is pressed down with the force of three or four men, thus turning up the forward end of the rapid piece, and fastened down to one of the grubs. This is a necessary precaution, to keep the rapid-piece from catching on the rocks at the bottom, when it dives in the eddy as it leaves the slides, which it is sure to do, frequently submerging the rafts and men to the depth of several feet. In these cases, a line (cable) is stretched from end to end of the piece, to enable the men to save themselves by laying hold of it. This rapid-piece is now ready for its long descent of the currents, over the slides, falls, dams, and rapids, and out to the Mississippi. From two to eight men are necessary to manage a rapid piece, according to the difficulties and dangers of the various rapids. Twenty of these rapid-pieces, more or less, constitute a "fleet," managed by one pilot and his gang of hands. On approaching a rapid, slide, or fall, the whole fleet is tied up in the eddy above, and then two, four, or eight hands, as may be necessary, get on to a single piece, and run it to the eddy below, where they tie it up, and return to the head of the rapid for another piece; and so on till the whole fleet is over. This footing it up over the falls, after a piece is run down, is called by the men "gigging back;" it is generally done at a quick pace, and the distance traveled, from sun to sun, by a gang in running a rapid and "gigging back," is often fifty, sixty or seventy miles a day, and forms a pretty severe introduction of the green-horns into the mysteries of going down on a raft. These eddies, or resting-places in smooth water, are indispensable grounds; and such has become the volume of business on this river, that the eddy-room is becoming insufficient for it in the more busy seasons of running out. Twenty fleets, at the same time, may often