

tain in his boat secured it with a noose, and disengaged it from the oyster. He flapped his wings violently as they approached, but could not escape.

*Dec. 29.*—Savannah has a population of 12,000 souls, but seems rather stationary, though some new buildings are rising. The mildness of its climate is attributed partly to the distance to which the Alleghany Mountains retire from the sea coast in this latitude, and partly to the proximity of the Gulf-stream. But many of the northern invalids, who are consumptive, and had hoped to escape a winter by taking refuge in this city, are complaining of the frost, and say that the houses are inadequately protected against cold. The sun is very powerful at mid-day, and we see the *Camellia Japonica* in the gardens flowering in the open air; but the leaves of the orange trees look crisp and frost-bitten, and I am told that the thermometer lately fell as low as 17° Fahr., so that even the salt water froze over in some of the marshes.

While at Savannah I made a delightful excursion, in company with Dr. Le Conte, Captain Alexander, and Mr. Hodgson, to Skiddaway, one of the sea-islands, which may be said to form part of a great delta on the coast of Georgia, between the mouths of the Savannah and Ogeechee rivers. This alluvial region consists of a wide extent of low land elevated a few feet above high water, and intersected by numerous creeks and swamps. I gave some account in my former tour of my visit to Heyner's Bridge,\* where the bones of the extinct mastodon and mylodon were found. Skiddaway is five or six miles farther from Savannah in the same southeast direction, and is classical ground for the geologist, for, on its northwest end, where there is a low cliff from two to six feet in height, no less than three skeletons of the huge *Megatherium* have been dug up, besides the remains of the *Mylodon*, *Elephas primigenius*, *Mastodon giganteus*, and a species of the ox tribe. The bones occur in a dark peaty soil or marsh mud, above which is a stratum, three or four feet thick, of sand, charged with oxide of iron, and below them and beneath the sea level, occurs sand containing a great number of marine fossil shells, all

\* Travels in North America, vol. i. p. 163.