

CHAPTER XVIII.

Savannah to Darien.—Anti-Slavery Meetings discussed.—War with England.—Landing at Darien.—Crackers.—Scenery on Altamaha River.—Negro Boatmen singing.—Marsh Blackbird in Rice Grounds.—Hospitality of Southern Planters.—New Clearing and Natural Rotation of Trees.—Birds.—Shrike and Kingfisher.—Excursion to St. Simon's Island.—Butler's Island and Negroes.—Stumps of Trees in Salt Marshes proving Subsidence of Land.—Alligator seen.—Their Nests and Habits.—Their Fear of Porpoises.—Indian Shell Mound on St. Simon's Island.—Date-palm, Orange, Lemon, and Olive Trees.—Hurricanes.—Visit to outermost Barrier Island.—Sea Shells on Beach.—Negro Maid-Servants.

Dec. 31, 1845.—ON the last day of the year we sailed in a steamer from Savannah to Darien, in Georgia, about 125 miles farther south, skirting a low coast, and having the Gulf-stream about sixty miles to the eastward of us. Our fellow-passengers consisted of planters, with several mercantile men from northern states. The latter usually maintained a prudent reserve on politics; yet one or two warm discussions arose, in which not only the chances of war with England, and the policy of the party now in power, but the more exciting topic of slavery, and the doings at a recent anti-slavery meeting in Exeter Hall, London, were spoken of. I was told by a fellow-passenger, that some of the Georgian planters who are declaiming most vehemently against Mr. Polk for so nearly drawing them into a war with Great Britain, were his warmest supporters in the late presidential election. "They are justly punished," he said, "for voting against their principles. Although not belonging to the democratic party, they went for Polk in order that Texas might be annexed; and now that they have carried that point, their imaginations are haunted with the image of the cotton trade paralyzed, an English fleet ravaging the coast and carrying away their negroes, as in the last war, and, worst of all, the abolitionists of the north looking on with the utmost complacency at their ruin." One of the most moderate of the planters, with whom I conversed apart, told me that the official avowal of the English