

tenance of the pilot made his appeal irresistible. The bed at our humble inn was clean, but next morning we were annoyed by having to sit down to breakfast with a poor white family, to whom the same compliment could not be paid—a man and his wife and four children, belonging to the class called “crackers” in Georgia. The etymology of this word is rather uncertain, some deriving it from the long whips used by the wagoners. They are a class of small proprietors, who seem to acquire slovenly habits from dependence on slaves, of whom they can maintain but few.

The next morning, while we were standing on the river's bank, we were joined by Mr. Hamilton Couper, with whom I had corresponded on geological matters, and whom I have already mentioned as the donor of a splendid collection of fossil remains to the museum at Washington, and, I may add, of other like treasures to that of Philadelphia. He came down the river to meet us in a long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress, and rowed by six negroes, who were singing loudly, and keeping time to the stroke of their oars. He brought us a packet of letters from England, which had been sent to his house, a welcome New Year's gift; and when we had glanced over their contents, we entered the boat and began to ascend the Altamaha.

The river was fringed on both sides with tall canes and with the cypress (*Cupressus disticha*), and many other trees, still leafless, which, being hung with gray moss, gave a somber tone to the scenery at this season, in spite of the green leaves of several species of laurel, myrtle, and magnolia. But wherever there was a break in the fringe of trees, which flourished luxuriantly in the swamps bordering the river, a forest of evergreen pines was seen in the back ground. For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the “red bird.” The other five then joined in chorus, always repeating the same words. Occa-