

sionally they struck up a hymn, taught them by the Methodists, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane.

Darien is on the left or northern bank of the Altamaha. About fifteen miles above it, on the opposite bank, we came to Hopeton, the residence of Mr. H. Couper, having first passed from the river into a canal, which traversed the low rice fields. Here we put up prodigious flights of the marsh blackbird (*Ajellaius phœniceus*), sometimes called the red-winged starling, because the male has some scarlet feathers in the upper part of his wing. When several thousands of them are in rapid motion at once, they darken the air like a cloud, and then, when the whole of them suddenly turn their wings edgeways, the cloud vanishes, to reappear as instantaneously the next moment. Mr. Couper encourages these birds, as they eat up all the loose grains of rice scattered over the field after the harvest has been gathered in. If these seeds are left, they spring up the year following, producing what is called volunteer rice, always of inferior quality to that which is regularly sown. From the rice grounds we walked up a bank to a level table land, composed of sand, a few yards above the river, and covered with pines and a mixture of scrub oak. Here, in this genial climate, there are some wild flowers in bloom every day of the year. On this higher level, near the slope which faces the rice fields and the river, stands the house of Hopeton, where we spent our time very agreeably for a fortnight. Much has been said in praise of the hospitality of the southern planter, but they alone who have traveled in the southern states, can appreciate the perfect ease and politeness with which a stranger is made to feel himself at home. Horses, carriages, boats, servants, are all at his disposal. Even his little comforts are thought of, and every thing is done as heartily and naturally as if no obligation were conferred. When northerners who are not very rich receive guests in the country, where domestic servants are few and expensive, they are often compelled, if they would insure the comfort of their visitors, to perform me-