

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Claiborne, Alabama.—Movers to Texas.—State Debts and Liabilities.—Lending money to half-settled States.—Rumors of war with England.—Macon, Alabama.—Sale of Slaves.—Drunkenness in Alabama.—Laws against Dueling.—Jealousy of Wealth.—Emigration to the West.—Democratic Equality of Whites.—Skeleton of Fossil Whale or Zeuglodon.—Voyage to Mobile.

THE morning after our arrival at Claiborne, we found at the inn, a family of "movers" on their way to Texas, sitting in the verandah enjoying the warm sunshine after a shower of rain. At this season, January 29th, the thermometer stood at 80° Fahrenheit in the shade, and the air was as balmy as on an English summer day. The green sward was covered with an elegant flower, the *Houstonia serpyllifolia*, different from the *H. cerulia*, so common in the New England meadows. Before the house stood a row of Pride-of-India trees (*Melia azedarach*), laden with bunches of yellow berries. I had been often told by the negroes that the American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) "got drunk" on this fruit, and we had now an opportunity of witnessing its narcotic properties; for we saw some children playing with one of these birds before the house, having caught it after it had been eating freely of the berries. My wife seeing that the robin was in no small danger of perishing, bought it of the children for some sugar-plums, and it soon revived in our room, and flew out of the window. In the evening we enjoyed a sight of one of those glorious sunsets, the beauty of which in these latitudes is so striking, when the clouds and sky are lighted up with streaks of brilliant red, yellow, and green, which, if a painter should represent faithfully, might seem as exaggerated and gaudy as would the colors of an American forest in autumn when compared with European woods.

The movers, who were going to Texas, had come down 200 miles from the upper country of Alabama, and were waiting for some