

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Return to Mobile.—Excursion to the Shores of the Gulf of Mexico.—View from Lighthouse.—Mouth of Alabama River.—Gnathodon inhabiting Brackish Water.—Banks of these Fossil Shells far Inland.—Miring of Cattle.—Yellow Fever at Mobile in 1839.—Fire in same Year.—Voyage from Mobile to New Orleans.—Movers to Texas.—Lake Pontchartrain.—Arrival at New Orleans.—St. Louis Hotel.—French Aspect of City.—Carnival.—Procession of Masks.

*Feb. 21, 1846.*—THERE had been some very cold weather in the beginning of the month in the upper country, the thermometer at Tuscaloosa having been down as low as 17° Fahr.; yet, on our return to Mobile, we saw the signs of approaching spring, for on the banks of the Alabama river the deciduous cypress and cotton trees were putting out their leaves, and the beautiful scarlet seed-vessels of the red maple (*Acer Drummondii*) enlivened the woods.

Once more at Mobile, I was impatient to see, for the first time, the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and therefore lost no time in making an excursion to the mouth of the Alabama River. I was fortunate in having as my companion the Rev. Dr. Hamilton, minister of the principal Presbyterian congregation, who was well acquainted with the natural history of this region. He drove me first to the lighthouse, where, from the top of the tower, we had a splendid view of the city to the north, and to the south the noble bay of Mobile, fourteen miles across. The keeper of the lighthouse looked sickly, which is not surprising, as he is living in a swamp in this region of malaria. It was his first year of residence, and the second year is said to be most trying to the constitution. The women, however, of his family, seemed healthy. We then went to the sea-side, two miles to the eastward, and found the waters of the bay smooth and unrippled, like an extensive lake, the woods coming down every where to its edge, and the live oaks and long-leaved pines, with the buck-eye and several