

other trees just beginning to put forth their young leaves. As the most northern countries I had visited in Europe—Norway and Sweden—were characterized by fir trees mingled with birch, I was surprised to find the most southern spot I had yet seen, a plain only a few feet above the level of the sea, almost equally characterized by a predominance of pines. On the ground I observed a species of cactus, about one foot high, and the marshy spots were covered with the candleberry (*Myrica carolinensis*), resembling the species so common in the north, in the scent of its aromatic leaves, but thrice as high as I had seen it before. The most common plant in flower was the English chickweed (*Cerastium vulgare*), a truly cosmopolite species.

A prodigious quantity of drift timber, of all sizes, and in every stage of decomposition, lay stranded far and wide along the shore. Many of the trunks of the trees had been floated a thousand miles and more down the Mississippi and its tributaries, and, after escaping by one of the many mouths of the great river, had drifted one hundred and fifty miles eastward to this spot. The fact of their long immersion in salt water was sometimes proved by a dense coat of encrusting barnacles, the only marine shells we could find here, for the mollusks proper to this part of the bay are such as belong to fresh or brackish water, of the genera *Cyrena*, *Gnathodon*, and *Neritina*. Just before our visit, a north wind had been blowing and driving back the sea water for some days, and the bay was so freshened by the Alabama River pouring in at this season a full stream, that I could detect no brackish taste in the water. It is, in fact, so sweet here, that ships often resort to the spot to take in water. Yet there is a regular tide rising three feet every six hours, and, when the wind blows from the south, the waters are raised six or seven feet.

After walking over a large expanse of ripple-marked sands, we came to banks of mud, inhabited by the bivalve shell called *Gnathodon*, some of which we dug up alive from a depth of about two inches from the surface. This part of the bay of Mobile is now the most northern locality of this remarkable brackish-water genus, but dead shells of the same species are traced many miles inland, forming banks three or four feet thick. They are called