

canal. The shell road, so called from the materials used in its construction, namely, the valves of the *Gnathodon cuneatus*, before mentioned, is of a dazzling white color, and in the bright sunshine formed a strong contrast with the vegetation of the adjoining swamps. Yet the verdure of the tall cypresses is somewhat dimmed by the somber color of the gray Spanish moss hanging every where from its boughs like drapery. The rich clusters of scarlet and purplish fruit of the red maple (*Acer Drummondii*) were very conspicuous, and the willows have just unfolded their apple-green leaves. The swamp palmetto (*Chamærops adansoniana*) raises its fan-shaped leaves ten feet high, although without any main trunk, like the sea-island palmetto before described. Several of them are surmounted by spikes bearing seeds. Among the spring flowers we gathered violets (*Viola cuculata*), the elegant *Houstonia serpyllifolia*, which we had first seen at Claiborne, and a white bramble (*Rubus trivialis*), the odor of which resembles that of our primrose. The common white clover, also, is most abundant here, as on the banks of the Mississippi, below New Orleans; yet it is not a native of Louisiana, and some botanists doubt whether any of the European species now growing wild in this state are indigenous.

Lake Pontchartrain is about fifteen feet below high water, and two feet below the lowest water of the Mississippi. It is said to have become sensibly shallower in the last forty years, its depth being now fourteen or fifteen feet only, for it receives annual supplies of mud from the Mississippi, poured into it by one of its mouths, called the Iberville River.

The southeast wind sometimes drives the salt water into the great lagoon, and raises its level from five to ten feet. On a mud bank near the shore I observed the living *Gnathodon*, accompanied by a modiola (*Dreissena?*), and there was a small bank of dead shells on the southern borders of the lake, which may have been thrown up by the waves in a storm, the valves of most of them being separate. I learned that the road materials before spoken of were procured from the east end, where there is an enormous mound of dead shells, a mile long, fifteen feet high, and from twenty to sixty yards broad. Dr. Riddell, Director of the