

Mississippi, made by an old bed of the great river, which measured nine inches between the eyes. I took no other measurement of its dimensions, and had no means of weighing it; but I am confident it would have weighed more than a hundred pounds. I saw the skull of one much smaller, caught by a gentleman in the same county, which weighed seventy-five pounds. I have seen none of half that size in this vicinity. I kept two for several years in my fish-pond. They became very tame, but finding they were eating my fish I shot one, and wounded the other with a fish-gig; but his sagacity prevented my capturing him. I fed the perch and minnows with bread, which the alligator turtle<sup>1</sup> devoured greedily. One day, after he had eaten, he remained upon the rock where I had fed him, and which was only about a foot beneath the surface, where it shelved over water ten feet deep. A swarm of minnows and perch were picking up crumbs around him, apparently unconscious of his presence. His head and feet were drawn sufficiently within his shell to be concealed. His mossy shell could not well be distinguished from the projections of the rock, on which he was lying in ambush. Several large bass were gliding around him, occasionally darting at the minnows. One of these, about fourteen inches in length, came within striking distance of his head, which he suddenly thrust out and fastened upon him, fixing his aquiline bill deeply into his side and belly. He immediately drew the fish under him, and, holding him down firmly to the rock with his forefeet, ate him greedily, very much as a hawk devours its prey. I drew out a large line and hook and baited it with a minnow, and threw it to him, determined to get rid of this skilful angler. He seized it; I gave a sharp jerk, and fastened it in his lower jaw. Finding him too heavy to lift by the hook upon a rock six feet perpendicular, I led him around to the lower end of the pool, where the bank was low, and the water shallow. But, after getting him within a few feet of the edge of the water, he anchored himself by stretching forward his forefeet, and resisted all my efforts to get him nearer. He seemed to be in a furious rage, and, after several sharp snaps at the line, he broke the hook and retreated into the deepest part of the pool. I never could get him to bite at any thing afterwards; and, finding I had a design upon his life, he became very shy. I afterwards discovered him in deep water, eating the bread which fell from the shelving rock, on which he had fed for several years, but upon which he never ventured afterwards when I was near. I threw a gig at him, and fastened it in his neck; but, by a violent effort with one of his forefeet, he tore it loose and ran under the rock. I frequently saw him after his escape, but always in the act of retreating to his hiding-place, which was

<sup>1</sup> This is the name given to this species in the Southern States.