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A NATURALIST'S EXCURSION IN FLORIDA.

The entertaining letter annexed is from Mr. Audubon to the editor of the American Monthly Journal of Geology, published at Philadelphia.

Bulowville, East Florida, Dec. 31, 1831.

MY DEAR F.—I have just returned from an expedition down the Halifax river, about 40 miles from this place, and 80 south of St. Augustine. I feel confident, that an account of it will be interesting to you; and I therefore set to. Mr. J. J. Bulow, a rich planter, at whose house myself and party have been a whole week, under the most hospitable and welcome treatment that could possibly be expected, proposed, three days since, that we should proceed down the river, in search of new or valuable birds; and accordingly, the boat, six hands, and "three white men," with some provisions, put off, with a fair wind and a pure sky. I saw a pure sky, because not a cloud interrupted the rich blue of the heavens in this generally favored latitude. We ascended down a creek for about eleven miles—the water nearly torpid yet clear—the shore lined with thousands of acres covered by fall grapes, marshes, and high palm trees; rendering the shore quite novel to my anxious eye. Some birds were shot, and secured so as to be brought back in order to undergo the skinning operation. Before long we entered the Halifax river, an inland arm of the sea, measuring in breadth from a quarter to nearly a mile. The breeze was keen from the north east, and our light bark leaped over the waves gaily onward, toward the spot which we all anxiously anticipated to reach ere night came on. We did so, passing several plantations on the western bank, and at last reached a schooner from New York, anchored at what is here called a *live oak landing*. Kindly received by the master and his men, we spent the night very agreeably, and as comfortably as circumstances would permit. At sunrise the next morning, I and four negro servants proceeded in search of birds and adventures. The fact is, that I was anxious to kill some brown Pelicans, (*Pelicanus fuscus*) to enable me to make a new drawing of an adult male bird, and to preserve the dresses of the others.

I proceeded along a narrow shallow bay, where the fish were truly abundant. Would you believe it, if I was to say, that the fish, nearly obstructed our head way?—believe it, or not, so it was; the water was filled with them, large and small. I shot some rare birds, and putting along the shore, passed a point, when lo! I came in sight of several hundred pelicans perched on the branches of mangrove trees, seated in comfortable harmony, as near each other as the strength of the bough would allow. I ordered to back water gently: the banks backed water. I waded to the shore under the cover of the rushes along it, saw the pelicans fast asleep, examined their countenance and department well and leisurely, and after all, levelled, fired my piece, and dropped two of the finest specimens I ever saw. I really believe I would have shot a hundred of these reverend sirs, had not a mistake taken place in the reloading of my gun. A mistake, however, did take place, and to my utmost disappointment, I saw each pelican, old and young, leave his perch and take to wing: soaring off, well pleased, I dare say, at making so good an escape from so dangerous a foe.

The birds were all gone, and soaring high in the pure atmosphere; but the fish were as abundant as ever. I ordered the net to be thrown overboard, and in a few minutes, we caught as many as we wanted—fine fish too, bass and row mullets. The porpoises were as busy as ourselves, and devoured them at a great rate.

The tide now began to leave us; and you must know that in this part of our country, the tide goes down not a pace, but in a hurry, so much so, indeed, that notwithstanding our rowing before it, we were on several occasions, obliged to leap into the briny stream, and push the boat over oyster banks as sharp as razors.

After shooting some more birds, and pulling our boat through many a difficult channel, we reached the schooner again; and as the birds, generally speaking, appeared wild and few—you must be aware that I call birds few when I shoot less than one hundred per day)—my generous host proposed to return towards home again. Preparations were accordingly made, and we left the schooner, with tide and wind in our teeth, and with the prospect of a very cold night. Our hands pulled well, and our barque was as light as our hearts. All went on merrily until dark night came on. The wind freshening, the cold augmenting, the provisions diminishing, the waters lowering,—all depreciating except our enterprising dispositions. We found ourselves fast in the mud about 200 yards from a marshy shore, without the least hope of being able to raise a fire, for no trees except palm trees were near, and the grand diable himself could not burn one of them. Our minds were soon made up to do—what? Why, to roll ourselves in our cloaks, and to lay down, the best way we could, at the bottom of our light and beautiful barque. What a night! to sleep was impossible; the cold increased with the breeze, and every moment seemed an hour, from the time we stretched ourselves down until the first glimpse of the morn: but the morn came clear as ever morn was, and the north-easter as cold as ever wind blew in this latitude. All hands half dead, and masters as nearly exhausted as the hands—stiffened with cold, light clothed, and but slight hope of hearing any shore; our only resort was,

to leap into the mire, waist deep, and to push the barque to a point, some 5 or 600 yards, where a few scrubby trees seemed to have grown, to save our lives on this occasion—"Push boys, push! Push for your lives!" cry the generous Bulow, and the poor Audubon—"All hands push!" Aye, and well might we push; the mire was up to our breasts, our limbs becoming stiffened and almost useless at every step we took. Our progress was slowly performed as if we had been clogged with heavy chains. It took us two and a half hours to reach the point, where the few trees of which I have spoken were; but we did get there.

We landed!! and well it was that we did; for on reaching the margin of the marsh, two of the negroes fell down in the mud, as senseless as torpidly ever rendered an alligator, or a snake; and had we, the white men, not been there, they certainly would have died. We had them carried into the little grove, to which I believe all of us owe our lives. I struck a fire in a crack, and in five minutes I saw with indescribable pleasure, the bright warming blaze of a log pile in the centre of our shivering party. We wrapped the negroes in their blankets—boiled some water and soon had some tea—made them swallow it, and with care revived them into animation. May God preserve you from being ever in the condition of our party at this juncture, scarcely a man able to stand, and the cold wind blowing as keenly as ever. Our men, however, gradually revived—the trees one after another, fell under the hatchet and increased our fire—and in two hours I had the pleasure to see cheerful faces again. We all got warm again and tolerably gay, although the prospect was far from being pleasant; no road to go home, or to any habitation; confined in a large salt marsh with rushes head high, and mire; no provisions left, and fifteen miles from the house of our host.

Not a moment was to be lost. For I foresaw that the next night would prove much colder still. The boat was manned once more, and off through the mud we moved to double the point and enter the creek, of which I have spoken, with a hope that in it we should find water enough to float her. It did happen so, and as we once more saw our barque afloat, our spirits rose—and rose to such a pitch, that we in fun set fire to the wide marsh: crack! crack! went the reeds with a rapid blaze. We saw the marsh rabbits, &c., scampering from the fire by thousands, as we pulled our oars.

Our pleasure at being afloat did not last long. The north easter had well nigh emptied the creek of all its usual quantum of water; and to wade and push our boat over many a shallow was again our resort, with intent to make a landing, from whence we could gain the sea beach.

We did effect a landing at last. The boat was abandoned, the game fastened to the backs of the negroes—the guns reloaded and on we proceeded through the marsh first, then through the tangled palmitoes and scrubby sturdy, live oaks, we reached the sea beach.

The sea beach of East Florida—have you ever seen it? If you have not, I advise you strongly never to pay a visit to it, under the circumstances that brought me and my companions to it on yesterday morning. We saw the ocean spread broad before our eyes, but it looked angry and roughly, strewn with high agitated waves that came in quick succession towards the desolate naked shore; not an object in view but the pure sky and the agitated waters. We took up our line of march in a poor plight believe me. The Poles, on laying down their arms, could not have felt more done up than we did at this moment. Pretty walking along the sea side beach of Florida in the month of December! with the wind at north east and we going in its very teeth, through sand, that sent our feet back six inches at every step of two feet that we made. Well, through this we all waded for many a long mile, picking up here and there a shell that is no where else to be found until we reached the landing place of J. J. Bulow. Now my heart cheered up once more; for the sake of my kind host—troubled with rheumatic pains as he is. I assure you, I was glad to see him bearing his own comfortable roof; and as we saw the large house opening to view, across his immense plantation, I anticipated a good dinner with as much pleasure as I ever experienced.

All hands returned alive; refreshment and good care have made us all well again, unless it be the stiffness occasioned in my left leg, by nearly six weeks of daily wading through swamps and salt marshes, or scrambling thro' the vilest thickets of scrubby live oaks and palmitoes, that appear to have been created for no purpose but to punish us for our sins; thickets that can only be matched in the cantos of your favorite Dante.

To give you an account of the little I have seen of East Florida, would fill a volume, and therefore I will not attempt it just now; but I will draw a slight sketch of a part of it.

The land, if land it can be called, is generally so very sandy that nothing can be raised up on it. The swamps are the only spots that afford a fair chance for cultivation: the swamps, then, are positively the only places where plantations are to be found. These plantations are even few in number; along the coast from St. Augustine to Cape Canaveral, there are about a dozen. These, with the exception of two or three, are yet young plantations. Gen. Hernandez's, J. J. Bulow's and Mr. Durham's are the strongest, and perhaps the best. Sugar cane will prosper, and doubtless do well: but the labour necessary to produce a good crop is great! great! great!!! Between the swamps of which I now speak, and which are found along the margin lying west of the sea inlet, that divides the main land from the Atlantic, to the river St. John of the interior of the peninsula, nothing exists but barren pine lands of poor timber, and immense savannas, mostly overflowed, and all unfit for cultivation. That growth which in any other country is called underwood, scarcely exists; the land being covered

with low palmitoes, or very low, thickly branched dwarf oaks, almost impenetrable to man. The climate is of the most unsettled nature, at least at this season. The thermometer has made leaps from 30 to 89 degrees in 24 hours; cold, warm, sandy, muddy, watery—All these varieties may be felt and seen in one day's travelling.

I am extremely disappointed in this portion of the Florida, and would not advise any one to visit it; because he may have read the flowery accounts of preceding travellers.—The climate is much more unsteady than in Louisiana, in the same latitude; or any where along the Mexican gulph to the Sabine river, which is our boundary line. Game and fish, it is true, are abundant, but the body of valuable tillable land is too small to enable the peninsula ever to become a rich state.

I have seen nothing deserving your attention in a geological point of view, except quarries of stones which are a concrete of shells, excellent for building, and laying immediately under the surface of the sand, which every where seems to predominate. This concrete is curious in itself, and my friend, Bulow, who is now erecting some very extensive buildings for a sugarhouse has given me specimens, which I will forward to you, showing the different grades or ages of their formation. The fragments are cut out of the quarries with the common wood axe, and fashioned with the same instrument for building. You, of course, will readily make out that the water found in the neighborhood of all concretes, is hard or calcareous, being filtered through a kind of natural shell lime.

I have done but little, I am sorry to say, in my way. Birds are certainly not abundant here at this season; and I can readily account for this deficiency in the land birds: it is for the want of mast—mast, so abundant, in almost every portion of our country. But the water birds, notwithstanding all the fisheries in every river, creek, or even puddle, that I have seen, are scarce belief. It is true, a man may see hundreds of pelicans, and thousands of herons; but take these from the list, and water birds will be found very rare. I will see what spring will do, and write more fully on this ever devoted subject.

If I did not believe the day to be gone by, when it was necessary to defend my snake stories, I could send very serious accounts of the habits of those reptiles; and I should do it, if it were not that I might be thought to enjoy—too much—that triumph which the feeble hostility of three or four selfish individuals has forced upon me. I receive so many acts of real friendship and disinterested kindness, that I thank God, there is no room left in my heart to cherish unkind feelings towards any one. Indeed, I am not now so much surprised at the incredulity of persons who do not leave cities, for I occasionally hear of things which even stagger me, who am so often a denizen of woods and swamps. What do you think of rattlesnakes taking to the water, and swimming across inlets and rivers? I have not seen this, but I believe it; since the most respectable individuals assure me they have frequently been eye-witness of this fact. I can conceive of inducements which reptiles may have for traversing sheets of water to gain distant dry land, especially in a country which intersected by streams, and subject to inundations, which compel them to be often in the water. In such countries, it is not a common occurrence to find snakes afloat, and at great distances from the shore? This appears, no doubt, surprising to those who live where there is almost nothing but dry land; still they ought to be good natured and believe what others have seen. It has now been made notorious, that numerous, respectable individuals whom duty, or the love of adventure, have led into the wilds of our country, have often seen snakes—and the rattlesnake too—in trees; the good people, therefore, who pass their lives in stores and counting houses, ought not to contradict these facts, because they do not meet with rattlesnakes, hissing & snapping at them from the paper mulberries, as they go home to their dinners. They should remember that they ought to go further than that daily distance, if they wish to see any thing extraordinary.

And now, my dear F., adieu. In my next, I hope to give you some account of the St. John's river, and of the interior of the peninsula of East Florida, to the exploring of which I mean to devote some time.

Very faithfully yours,
JOHN JAMES AUDUBON.

**Snakes have frequently been met with in England, crossing broad Straits. In the Magazine of Natural History, for September, 1831, is an account by Mr. Bakewell, of snakes swimming across the Menai, more than two miles broad, to the Isle of Anglesea. When swimming, they produce an oscillatory motion of the head and neck.—En.*

From the New York Standard.— THE "TORPEDO" REPORT.

We pointed out yesterday the character of Mr. McDuffie's Report, as a mere statement of opinions previously expressed, and an *ex parte* argument upon the facts reported by the majority of the committee. It is not properly a report, but an intended refutation of that made by the committee. The friends of the bank trumpet its powers with their finest flourishes; the Intelligencer considers it a torpedo that will blow its predecessor out of its "element," and the Courier and Enquirer says that it "has completely nullified" Mr. Clayton's Report. The "other slaves of the lamp" have not yet made their most sweet voices audible upon the subject, but of course they will follow their leaders. Well, gentlemen, speak after what flourish your natures will, but we shall take leave to contradict you when you are wrong. So, at the threshold, we deny that the first report has been either "nullified" or "blown up." In the matter of the Courier and Enquirer—has Mr. McDuffie disproved, explained away, or even

denied a single fact stated in the Report? Has he done any thing more than simply declare that those facts do not in his opinion stain the uprightiness of the directors? and is not that opinion directly the converse of the opinion entertained by every impartial man of every party in the country! Is Mr. McDuffie's judgment so transcendent and infallible, that all other men must surrender their convictions and adopt his! His friends and fellow-laborers did not consider it, or they would not have attempted by an artifice to prop and fortify his opinion with that of Mr. Adams. Mr. A. does not coincide with Mr. McDuffie, but makes a report for himself. The Intelligencer calls it "the counter report of the minority," which minority, it says, "is constituted by Mr. McDuffie, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Watmough." But it is not so, and Mr. McDuffie's Report must depend for authority upon himself alone. The case of the Courier and Enquirer which is to be blancheted by his verdict, was stated from the testimony of the President of the bank, and that testimony must be controverted and the facts disproved, before the bank and the Courier are acquitted. If the friends of the institution desire to affix a "torpedo" to the Report of the Committee, that shall "blow it up," and "nullify" it in reality, we will tell them how to prepare one; though in doing so we must republish part of an article that was copied into our paper yesterday. The public will hold the bank exonerated of the charge of subsidizing the press, when it is proved, or even asserted by Mr. McDuffie, Mr. Adams and Mr. Watmough:

1. That the President of the Bank and the Exchange Committee did not loan the large sum of fifteen thousand dollars, without the knowledge of the board of directors knowing at the same time that the money was for the purchase of a paper before hostile to the Bank.

2. That they did not loan this money without any fixed time of payment, and before they had got the notes for it—and that the notes were afterwards sent on, with five years to run.

3. That this mode of doing business is not totally different from that pursued by the Bank, when it has no object in view but to lend money advantageously.

4. That when Webb and Noah afterwards applied for \$20,000, the exchange committee did not omit to inform the directors that the Bank had already \$15,000 of the same paper.

5. That a further loan of \$15,000 was not granted by the exchange committee, without the knowledge of the board of directors, just after the meeting of Congress, when the Bank had determined to ask a renewal of its charter, and when it might be supposed important to keep the conductors of a paper of extensive circulation in good humor.

6. That the credit of the individuals to whom these enormous loans of more than \$50,000 were made, was not such that they could not buy their printing paper without an endorser, and that they could not get discounts on the Branch of the U. S. Bank at New-York even with the endorser of Mr. Stewart, the father-in-law of Mr. Webb.

7. That in discounting Webband Noah's note upon the letter of recommendation of Mr. Stewart, instead of asking Mr. Stewart to show his faith by putting his name on the note, they did not do a thing which is not customary toward other applicants.

8. That in taking the testimony of journeymen, as the foundation for discounts to their employers, the Bank did not do a thing very unusual.

9. That Webb, Noah, Burrows, and the Bank directors, did not act the part of a man who takes to his heels at the sight of a constable, when they made arrangements for taking up the notes before they were due, upon ascertaining that Congress was disposed to enquire into the affair.

10. That Webb did not get the money to take up these notes from Burrows,—and that Burrows did not get it from the Bank.

11. That both Webb and Noah had not written or published violent attacks on the Bank, before they got on the first \$15,000 loan from Burrows.

12. That it was not understood, when Burrows agreed to loan the money, that the Courier and Enquirer was to change its course from opposition, to support of the Bank.

13. That the same thing was not understood when Mr. Biddle gave Mr. Burrows the money.

14. That the paper did not actually change its course, at the moment that its editors touched the "rhino."

15. That about the time of the application of Webb and Noah for their largest loan, they did not publish that their paper was "established beyond the remote contingency of any kind of aid or opposition from Banks."

16. That Burrows was not concealed in Philadelphia during the sittings of the Bank Committee, to avoid the service of a subpoena to attend before it.

17. That Burrows did not, about the same time of the loan to the New York Enquirer, offer to two other Jackson papers of New York, a pecuniary compensation, if they would publish articles favorable to the Bank.

18. That the Bank Directors are not well pleased with the service of Burrows, and have not loaned him large sums at Philadelphia, about the time of his paper being refused at the U. S. Branch Bank at New York.

From the N. Y. Evening Post.

Disclosures of the most painful nature have been made by the inquiries lately made in England as to what is called the "Factory System." This is a system of the most horrible abuse of the noble animal and intellectual nature which God has given to the human species. The *English Chronicle* contains an abstract of an authentic account of the number of children in a worsted manufactory, which it considers as a fair representation of the whole. In the factory in question, 475 children are employed; of whom 235 are between the ages of nine and twelve; 109 between twelve and fifteen; and 50

between fifteen and eighteen. They are superintended by fifteen men, and are compelled to come to their daily drudgery every month in the year at six o'clock in the morning, and to remain in the factory until seven in the evening; and sometimes until eight or nine—making always fourteen, and sometimes fifteen hours of toil every day, with an intermission of but half an hour for meals, rest, or recreation.

The consequences of this excessive confinement and toil, are, what might be expected. The growth of the boy is checked; the children become sickly, and their limbs weak and sometimes horribly distorted. These little slaves of the factory often fall asleep from weariness while standing at their work; and the overlooker, towards the latter part of the day, frequently finds it necessary to shake them by the shoulders to keep them awake. In the state of listlessness produced by excessive fatigue, they are kept in immediate contact with various kinds of dangerous machinery, with cogwheels and "devils" as they are called. Their fingers and hands get involved in the machinery, they are often frightfully mangled, and then they are sent to the hospital. At a meeting held at Leeds on the 5th of Feb. Dr. Smith, a surgeon of the Infirmary in that town, dwelt at much length on the baneful effect produced in those establishments, on the health and limbs of children. He said, "I have seen limbs which have been beautifully formed, in a short time, from the operation of these causes, reduced to the lowest state of deformity; and individuals who; but for these causes would have been models of beauty and manhood, doomed to remain through life deformed dwarfs. It is now about twelve years ago since my attention was first directed to this subject, in consequence of seeing an unusual number of cases of deformity of the lower extremities sent from a neighboring manufacturing town; the surprise however, at this circumstance ceased, when it was ascertained that at that period the children were worked much longer hours in the factories of that town than in this. The expenditure of the Infirmary for steel machines to prop up and support bent bones from those causes, soon after this period, became an item of such importance in the yearly expenses of the institution that the weekly board very properly thought it their duty to pass a resolution, taking from the surgeons the power of ordering machines costing beyond a certain sum, without first obtaining the consent of the board, and we have now frequently to compound the matter by getting the parish, from which the poor patient comes, to pay one half of the expense and the Infirmary the other."

The value of the Union.—There is force and beauty in the following sentences in the speech of Mr. Tyler, of Va. on the subject of Mr. Clay's resolution on the duties on imports:

"I have been reared in a reverential affection for the Union. My imagination has led me to look into the distant future, and there to contemplate the greatness of free America."

"I have beheld her walking on the waves of the mighty deep, carrying along with her, the blessings of great joy to distant nations. I have seen her overturning the strong places of despotism, and restoring to man his long-lost rights. Wo, wo, betide that man who shall sow the seeds of disunion among us! Better for him had he never been born. If he fall upon the mountains to hide him—nay, if he bury himself in the very centre of the earth, the indignation of mankind will find him out, and blast him with its lightnings."

Method of ascertaining the Purity of Water.

The purity of water is indicated by its specific gravity. By a late act of parliament it is defined that a cubic inch of water purified by distillation weighs, at the temperature of 62 deg. barometer 30 inches, exactly, 252,458 grains: An imperial pint of perfectly pure water weighs precisely 20 avoirdupois ounces at 62 deg. Any water heavier than this may be less pure. That the lightest water is the best is an old and true principle. Pliny says that some judgment of the wholeness of waters by contrasting their weights. Celsus alludes to the same practice—"nam levis pondere apparet." Hippocrates thought that the best water is that which heats and cools in the shortest time; and his echo and expositor, Celsus, affirms the same thing. Hoffman informs us that rivers of a rapid current, or which fall down mountains, afford a purer water than those that are more slow; and hence, he says, that ships coming out of the river Maine into the Rhine draw more water, and sink deeper in the latter, because the waters of the Rhine fall from the highest mountains of the Grisons country.—*Dr. Lardner's Treatise on Domestic Economy.*

A correspondent has furnished us with the following instance of juvenile depravity and singular revenge.—A lad about twelve years of age residing in Green street, near Front, gave to his mother occasion, yesterday afternoon, to scold him pretty severely; for which, in order to revenge himself upon her, he took a younger brother, about eight years of age, in the dusk of the evening, down to the wharf, actually pushed him in the Delaware, and drowned him!—He then ran home, and told his mother what he had done. The corpse was shortly fished up, but the vital spark had fled for ever. Being questioned as to what induced him to drown his brother, he replied that he did not intend to drown him, but only to push him in and then pull him out again, to spite his mother. But after he had done it, and his brother had come up for the first time, he found it was out of his reach, the little victim went down again, and again rose to the surface, but still beyond his reach. He then stood watching him till he had sunk the last time, when, upon his non-appearance, he ran home.

Since the above was in type, rumour says the boy was not drowned, but rescued by strangers and kept till this morning, when he was restored to his almost frantic mother.
Philad. Chron.