A Florida Sketch-Book

by Bradford Torrey

Chapter 7: On the St. Augustine Road

One of my first inquiries at Tallahassee was for the easiest way to the woods. The city is built on a hill, with other hills about it. These are mostly under cultivation, and such woods as lay within sight seemed to be pretty far off; and with the mercury at ninety in the shade, long tramps were almost out of the question. "Take the St. Augustine road," said the man to whom I had spoken; and he pointed out its beginning nearly opposite the state capitol. After breakfast I followed his advice, with results so pleasing that I found myself turning that corner again and again as long as I remained in Tallahassee.

The road goes abruptly downhill to the railway track, first between deep red gulches, and then between rows of negro cabins, each with its garden of rosebushes, now (early April) in full bloom. The deep sides of the gulches were draped with pendent lantana branches full of purple flowers, or, more beautiful still, with a profusion of fragrant white honeysuckle. On the roadside, between the wheel-track and the gulch, grew brilliant Mexican poppies, with Venus's looking-glass, yellow oxalis, and beds of blackberry vines. The woods of which my informant had spoken lay a little beyond the railway, on the right hand of the road, just as it began another ascent. I entered them at once, and after a semicircular turn through the pleasant paths, amid live-oaks, water-oaks, red oaks, chestnut oaks, magnolias, beeches, hickories, hornbeams, sweet gums, sweet bays, and long-leaved and short-leaved pines, came out into the road again a quarter of a mile farther up the hill. They were the fairest of woods to stroll in, it seemed to me, with paths enough, and not too many, and good enough, but not too good; that is to say, they were footpaths, not roads, though afterwards, on a Sunday afternoon, I met two young fellows riding through them on bicycles. The wood was delightful, also, after my two months in eastern Florida, for lying on a slope, and for having an undergrowth of loose shrubbery instead of a jungle of scrub oak and saw palmetto. Blue jays and crested flycatchers were doing their best to outscream one another,—with

the odds in favor of the flycatchers,—and a few smaller birds were singing, especially two or three summer tanagers, as many yellow-throated warblers, and a ruby-crowned kinglet. In one part of the wood, near what I took to be an old city reservoir, I came upon a single white-throated sparrow and a humming-bird,—the latter a strangely uncommon sight in Tallahassee, where, of all the places I have ever seen, it ought to find itself in clover. Here, too, were a pair of Carolina wrens, just now in search of a building-site, and conducting themselves exactly in the manner of bluebirds intent on such business; peeping into every hole that offered itself, and then, after the briefest interchange of opinion,—unfavorable on the female's part, if we may guess,—concluding to look a little farther.

As I struck the road again, a man came along on horseback, and we fell into conversation about the country. "A lovely country," he called it, and I agreed with him. He inquired where I was from, and I mentioned that I had lately been in southern Florida, and found this region a strong contrast. "Yes," he returned; and, pointing to the grass, he remarked upon the richness of the soil. "This yere land would fertilize that," he said, speaking of southern Florida.

"I shouldn't wonder," said I. I meant to be understood as concurring in his opinion, but such a qualified, Yankeefied assent seemed to him no assent at all.

"Oh, it will, it will!" he responded, as if the point were one about which I must on no account be left unconvinced. He told me that the fine house at which I had looked, a little distance back, through a long vista of trees, was the residence of Captain H., who owned all the land along the road for a good distance. I inquired how far the road was pretty, like this. "For forty miles," he said. That was farther than I was ready to walk, and coming soon to the top of the hill, or, more exactly, of the plateau, I stopped in the shade of a china-tree, and looked at the pleasing prospect. Behind me was a plantation of young pear-trees, and before me, among the hills northward, lay broad, cultivated slopes, dotted here and there with cabins and tall, solitary trees. On the nearer slope, perhaps a sixteenth of a mile away, a negro was ploughing, with a single ox harnessed in some primitive manner,—with pieces of wood, for the most part, as well as I could make out through an opera-glass. The soil offered the least possible hindrance, and both he and the ox seemed to be having a literal "walk-over." Beyond him—a full half-mile away, perhaps—another man was ploughing with a mule; and in another direction a third was doing likewise, with a woman following in his wake. A colored boy of seventeen—I guessed his age at twenty-three—came up the road in a cart, and I stopped him to inquire about the crops and other matters. The land in front of

me was planted with cotton, he said; and the men ploughing in the distance were getting ready to plant the same. They hired the land and the cabins of Captain H., paying him so much cotton (not so much an acre, but so much a mule, if I understood him rightly) by way of rent. We talked a long time about one thing and another. He had been south as far as the Indian River country, but was glad to be back again in Tallahassee, where he was born. I asked him about the road, how far it went. "They tell me it goes smack to St. Augustine," he replied; "I ain't tried it." It was an unlikely story, it seemed to me, but I was assured afterward that he was right; that the road actually runs across the country from Tallahassee to St. Augustine, a distance of about two hundred miles. With company of my own choosing, and in cooler weather, I thought I should like to walk its whole length.[1] My young man was in no haste. With the reins (made of rope, after a fashion much followed in Florida) lying on the forward axle of his cart, he seemed to have put himself entirely at my service. He had to the full that peculiar urbanity which I began after a while to look upon as characteristic of Tallahassee negroes,—a gentleness of speech, and a kindly, deferential air, neither forward nor servile, such as sits well on any man, whatever the color of his skin.

[Footnote 1: But let no enthusiast set out to walk from one city to the other on the strength of what is here written. After this sketch was first printed—in *The Atlantic Monthly*—a gentleman who ought to know whereof he speaks sent me word that my informants were all of them wrong—that the road does not run to St. Augustine. For myself, I assert nothing. As my colored boy said, "I ain't tried it."]

In that respect he was like another boy of about his own age, who lived in the cabin directly before us, but whom I did not see till I had been several times over the road. Then he happened to be at work near the edge of the field, and I beckoned him to me. He, too, was serious and manly in his bearing, and showed no disposition to go back to his hoe till I broke off the interview,—as if it were a point of good manners with him to await my pleasure. Yes, the plantation was a good one and easily cultivated, he said, in response to some remark of my own. There were five in the family, and they all worked. "We are all big enough to eat," he added, quite simply. He had never been North, but had lately declined the offer of a gentleman who wished to take him there,—him and "another fellow." He once went to Jacksonville, but couldn't stay. "You can get along without your father pretty well, but it's another thing to do without your mother." He never meant to leave home again as long as

his mother lived; which was likely to be for some years, I thought, if she were still able to do her part in the cotton-field. As a general thing, the colored tenants of the cabins made out pretty well, he believed, unless something happened to the crops. As for the old servants of the H. family, they didn't have to work,—they were provided for; Captain H.'s father "left it so in his testimonial." I spoke of the purple martins which were flying back and forth over the field with many cheerful noises, and of the calabashes that hung from a tall pole in one corner of the cabin yard, for their accommodation. On my way South, I told him, I had noticed these dangling long-necked squashes everywhere, and had wondered what they were for. I had found out since that they were the colored man's martin-boxes, and was glad to see the people so fond of the birds. "Yes," he said, "there's no danger of hawks carrying off the chickens as long as the martins are round."

Twice afterward, as I went up the road, I found him ploughing between the cotton rows; but he was too far away to be accosted without shouting, and I did not feel justified in interrupting him at his work. Back and forth he went through the long furrow after the patient ox, the hens and chickens following. No doubt they thought the work was all for their benefit. Farther away, a man and two women were hoeing. The family deserved to prosper, I said to myself, as I lay under a big magnolia-tree (just beginning to open its large white flowers) and idly enjoyed the scene. And it was just here, by the bye, that I solved an interesting etymological puzzle, to wit, the origin and precise meaning of the word "baygall,"—a word which the visitor often hears upon the lips of Florida people. An old hunter in Smyrna, when I questioned him about it, told me that it meant a swampy piece of wood, and took its origin, he had always supposed, from the fact that bay-trees and gall-bushes commonly grew in such places. A Tallahassee gentleman agreed with this explanation, and promised to bring home some gall-berries the next time he came across any, that I might see what they were; but the berries were never forthcoming, and I was none the wiser, till, on one of my last trips up the St. Augustine road, as I stood under the large magnolia just mentioned, a colored man came along, hat in hand, and a bag of grain balanced on his head.

"That's a large magnolia," said I.

He assented.

"That's about as large as magnolias ever grow, isn't it?"

"No, sir; down in the gall there's magnolias a heap bigger 'n that."

"A gall? What's that?"

"A baygall, sir."

"And what's a baygall?"

"A big wood."

"And why do you call it a baygall?"

He was stumped, it was plain to see. No doubt he would have scratched his head, if that useful organ had been accessible. He hesitated; but it isn't like an uneducated man to confess ignorance. "'Cause it's a desert," he said, "a thick place."

"Yes, yes," I answered, and he resumed his march.

The road was traveled mostly by negroes. On Sunday afternoons it looked quite like a flower garden, it was so full of bright dresses coming home from church. "Now'-days folks git religion so easy!" one young woman said to another, as they passed me. She was a conservative. I did not join the procession, but on other days I talked, first and last, with a good many of the people; from the preacher, who carried a handsome cane and made me a still handsomer bow, down to a serious little fellow of six or seven years, whom I found standing at the foot of the hill, beside a bundle of dead wood. He was carrying it home for the family stove, and had set it down for a minute's rest. I said something about his burden, and as I went on he called after me: "What kind of birds are you hunting for? Ricebirds?" I answered that I was looking for birds of all sorts. Had he seen any ricebirds lately? Yes, he said; he started a flock the other day up on[1] the hill.

"How did they look?" said I.

"They is red blackbirds," he returned. This was not the first time I had heard the redwing called the ricebird. But how did the boy know me for a bird-gazer? That was a mystery. It came over me all at once that possibly I had become better known in the community than I had in the least suspected; and then I remembered my field-glass. That, as I could not help being aware, was an object of continual attention. Every day I saw people, old and young, black and white, looking at it with undisguised curiosity. Often they passed audible comments upon it among themselves.

"How far can you see through the spyglass?" a bolder spirit would now and then venture to ask; and once, on the railway track out in the pine lands, a barefooted, happy-faced urchin made a guess that was really admirable for its ingenuity. "Looks like you're goin' over inspectin' the wire," he remarked. On rare occasions, as an act of special grace, I offered such an inquirer a peep through the magic lenses,—an experiment that never failed to elicit exclamations of wonder. Things were so near! And the observer looked comically incredulous, on putting down the glass, to find how suddenly the landscape had slipped away again. More

than one colored man wanted to know its price, and expressed a fervent desire to possess one like it; and probably, if I had ever been assaulted and robbed in all my solitary wanderings through the flat-woods and other lonesome places, my "spyglass" rather than my purse—the "lust of the eye" rather than the "pride of life"—would have been to thank.

[Footnote 1: He did not say "upon" any more than Northern white boys do.]

Here, however, there could be no thought of such a contingency. Here were no vagabonds (one inoffensive Yankee specimen excepted), but hard-working people going into the city or out again, each on his own lawful business. Scarcely one of them, man or woman, but greeted me kindly. One, a white man on horseback, invited, and even urged me, to mount his horse, and let him walk a piece. I must be fatigued, he was sure,—how could I help it?—and he would as soon walk as not. Finding me obstinate, he walked his horse at my side, chatting about the country, the trees, and the crops. He it was who called my particular attention to the abundance of blackberry vines. "Are the berries sweet?" I asked. He smacked his lips.

"Sweet as honey, and big as that," measuring off a liberal portion of his thumb. I spoke of them half an hour later to a middle-aged colored man. Yes, he said, the blackberries were plenty enough and sweet enough; but, for his part, he didn't trouble them a great deal. The vines (and he pointed at them, fringing the roadside indefinitely) were great places for rattlesnakes. He liked the berries, but he liked somebody else to pick them. He was awfully afraid of snakes; they were so dangerous. "Yes, sir" (this in answer to an inquiry), "there are plenty of rattlesnakes here clean up to Christmas." I liked him for his frank avowal of cowardice, and still more for his quiet bearing. He remembered the days of slavery,—"before the surrender," as the current Southern phrase is,—and his face beamed when I spoke of my joy in thinking that his people were free, no matter what might befall them. He, too, raised cotton on hired land, and was bringing up his children—there were eight of them, he said—to habits of industry.

My second stroll toward St. Augustine carried me perhaps three miles,—say one sixty-sixth of the entire distance,—and none of my subsequent excursions took me any farther; and having just now commended a negro for his candor, I am moved to acknowledge that, between the sand underfoot and the sun overhead, I found the six miles, which I spent at least four hours in accomplishing, more fatiguing than twice that distance would have been over New Hampshire hills. If I were to settle in that country, I should probably fall into the way

of riding more, and walking less. I remember thinking how comfortable a certain ponderous black mammy looked, whom I met on one of these same sunny and sandy tramps. She sat in the very middle of a tipcart, with an old and truly picturesque man's hat on her head (quite in the fashion, feminine readers will notice), driving a one-horned ox with a pair of clothes-line reins. She was traveling slowly, just as I like to travel; and, as I say, I was impressed by her comfortable appearance. Why would not an equipage like that be just the thing for a naturalistic idler?

Not far beyond my halting-place of two days before I came to a Cherokee rosebush, one of the most beautiful of plants,—white, fragrant, single roses (real roses) set in the midst of the handsomest of glossy green leaves. I was delighted to find it still in flower. A hundred miles farther south I had seen it finishing its season a full month earlier. I stopped, of course, to pluck a blossom. At that moment a female redbird flew out of the bush. Her mate was beside her instantly, and a nameless something in their manner told me they were trying to keep a secret. The nest, built mainly of pine needles and other leaves, was in the middle of the bush, a foot or two from the grass, and contained two bluish or greenish eggs thickly spattered with dark brown. I meant to look into it again (the owners seemed to have no great objection), but somehow missed it every time I passed. From that point, as far as I went, the road was lined with Cherokee roses,—not continuously, but with short intermissions; and from the number of redbirds seen, almost invariably in pairs, I feel safe in saying that the nest I had found was probably one of fifteen or twenty scattered along the wayside. How gloriously the birds sang! It was their day for singing. I was ready to christen the road anew,—Redbird Road.

But the redbirds, many and conspicuous as they were, had no monopoly of the road or of the day. House wrens were equally numerous and equally at home, though they sang more out of sight. Red-eyed chewinks, still far from their native berry pastures, hopped into a bush to cry, "Who's he?" at the passing of a stranger, in whom, for aught I know, they may have half recognized an old acquaintance. A bunch of quails ran across the road a little in front of me, and in another place fifteen or twenty red-winged blackbirds (not a red wing among them) sat gossiping in a treetop. Elsewhere, even later than this (it was now April 7), I saw flocks, every bird of which wore shoulder-straps,—like the traditional militia company, all officers. They did not gossip, of course (it is the male that sports the red), but they made a lively noise.

As for the mocking-birds, they were at the front here, as they were everywhere. During my

fortnight in Tallahassee there were never many consecutive five minutes of daylight in which, if I stopped to listen, I could not hear at least one mocker. Oftener two or three were singing at once in as many different directions. And, speaking of them, I must speak also of their more northern cousin. From the day I entered Florida I had been saying that the mocking-bird, save for his occasional mimicry of other birds, sang so exactly like the thrasher that I did not believe I could tell one from the other. Now, however, on this St. Augustine road, I suddenly became aware of a bird singing somewhere in advance, and as I listened again I said aloud, with full persuasion, "There! That's a thrasher!" There was a something of difference: a shade of coarseness in the voice, perhaps; a tendency to force the tone, as we say of human singers,—a something, at all events, and the longer I hearkened, the more confident I felt that the bird was a thrasher. And so it was,—the first one I had heard in Florida, although I had seen many. Probably the two birds have peculiarities of voice and method that, with longer familiarity on the listener's part, would render them easily distinguishable. On general principles, I must believe that to be true of all birds. But the experience just described is not to be taken as proving that I have any such familiarity. Within a week afterward, while walking along the railway, I came upon a thrasher and a mocking-bird singing side by side; the mocker upon a telegraph pole, and the thrasher on the wire, halfway between the mocker and the next pole. They sang and sang, while I stood between them in the cut below and listened; and if my life had depended on my seeing how one song differed from the other, I could not have done it. With my eyes shut, the birds might have changed places,—if they could have done it quickly enough,—and I should have been none the wiser.

As I have said, I followed the road over the nearly level plateau for what I guessed to be about three miles. Then I found myself in a bit of hollow that seemed made for a stopping-place, with a plantation road running off to the right, and a hillside cornfield of many acres on the left. In the field were a few tall dead trees. At the tip of one sat a sparrow-hawk, and to the trunk of another clung a red-bellied woodpecker, who, with characteristic foolishness, sat beside his hole calling persistently, and then, as if determined to publish what other birds so carefully conceal, went inside, thrust out his head, and resumed his clatter. Here, too, were a pair of bluebirds, noticeable for their rarity, and for the wonderful color—a shade deeper than is ever seen at the North, I think—of the male's blue coat. In a small thicket in the hollow beside the road were noisy white-eyed vireos, a ruby-crowned kinglet,—a tiny thing that within a month would be singing in Canada, or beyond,—an unseen wood pewee, and (also unseen) a hermit thrush, one of perhaps twenty solitary individuals that I found scattered

about the woods in the course of my journeyings. Not one of them sang a note. Probably they did not know that there was a Yankee in Florida who—in some moods, at least—would have given more for a dozen bars of hermit thrush music than for a day and a night of the mocking-bird's medley. Not that I mean to disparage the great Southern performer; as a vocalist he is so far beyond the hermit thrush as to render a comparison absurd; but what I love is a singer, a voice to reach the soul. An old Tallahassee negro, near the "white Norman school,"—so he called it,—hit off the mocking-bird pretty well. I had called his attention to one singing in an adjacent dooryard. "Yes," he said, "I love to hear 'em. They's very amusin', very amusin'." My own feeling can hardly be a prejudice, conscious or unconscious, in favor of what has grown dear to me through early and long-continued association. The difference between the music of birds like the mocker, the thrasher, and the catbird and that of birds like the hermit, the veery, and the wood thrush is one of kind, not of degree; and I have heard music of the mocking-bird's kind (the thrasher's, that is to say) as long as I have heard music at all. The question is one of taste, it is true; but it is not a question of familiarity or favoritism. All praise to the mocker and the thrasher! May their tribe increase! But if we are to indulge in comparisons, give me the wood thrush, the hermit, and the veery; with tones that the mocking-bird can never imitate, and a simplicity which the Fates—the wise Fates, who will have variety—have put forever beyond his appreciation and his reach.

Florida as I saw it (let the qualification be noted) is no more a land of flowers than New England. In some respects, indeed, it is less so. Flowering shrubs and climbers there are in abundance. I rode in the cars through miles on miles of flowering dogwood and pink azalea. Here, on this Tallahassee road, were miles of Cherokee roses, with plenty of the climbing scarlet honeysuckle (beloved of humming-birds, although I saw none here), and nearer the city, as already described, masses of lantana and white honeysuckle. In more than one place pink double roses (vagrants from cultivated grounds, no doubt) offered buds and blooms to all who would have them. The cross-vine (Bignonia), less freehanded, hung its showy bells out of reach in the treetops. Thorn-bushes of several kinds were in flower (a puzzling lot), and the treelike blueberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*), loaded with its large, flaring white corollas, was a real spectacle of beauty. Here, likewise, I found one tiny crab-apple shrub, with a few blossoms, exquisitely tinted with rose-color, and most exquisitely fragrant. But the New Englander, when he talks of wild flowers, has in his eye something different from these. He is not thinking of any bush, no matter how beautiful, but of trailing arbutus, hepaticas, bloodroot, anemones, saxifrage, violets, dogtooth violets, spring beauties, "cowslips,"

buttercups, corydalis, columbine, Dutchman's breeches, clintonia, five-finger, and all the rest of that bright and fragrant host which, ever since he can remember, he has seen covering his native hills and valleys with the return of May.

It is not meant, of course, that plants like these are wholly wanting in Florida. I remember an abundance of violets, blue and white, especially in the flat-woods, where also I often found pretty butterworts of two or three sorts. The smaller blue ones took very acceptably the place of hepaticas, and indeed I heard them called by that name. But, as compared with what one sees in New England, such "ground flowers," flowers which it seems perfectly natural to pluck for a nosegay, were very little in evidence. I heard Northern visitors remark the fact again and again. On this pretty road out of Tallahassee—itself a city of flower gardens—I can recall nothing of the kind except half a dozen strawberry blossoms, and the oxalis and specularia before mentioned. Probably the round-leaved houstonia grew here, as it did everywhere, in small scattered patches. If there were violets as well, I can only say I have forgotten them.

Be it added, however, that at the time I did not miss them. In a garden of roses one does not begin by sighing for mignonette and lilies of the valley. Violets or no violets, there was no lack of beauty. The Southern highway surveyor, if such a personage exists, is evidently not consumed by that distressing puritanical passion for "slicking up things" which too often makes of his Northern brother something scarcely better than a public nuisance. At the South you will not find a woman cultivating with pain a few exotics beside the front door, while her husband is mowing and burning the far more attractive wild garden that nature has planted just outside the fence. The St. Augustine road, at any rate, after climbing the hill and getting beyond the wood, runs between natural hedges,—trees, vines, and shrubs carelessly intermingled,—not dense enough to conceal the prospect or shut out the breeze ("straight from the Gulf," as the Tallahassean is careful to inform you), but sufficient to afford much welcome protection from the sun. Here it was good to find the sassafras growing side by side with the persimmon, although when, for old acquaintance' sake, I put a leaf into my mouth I was half glad to fancy it a thought less savory than some I had tasted in Yankeeland. I took a kind of foolish satisfaction, too, in the obvious fact that certain plants—the sumach and the Virginia creeper, to mention no others—were less at home here than a thousand miles farther north. With the wild-cherry trees, I was obliged to confess, the case was reversed. I had seen larger ones in Massachusetts, perhaps, but none that looked half so clean and thrifty. In truth, their appearance was a puzzle, rum-cherry trees as by all tokens they undoubtedly were, till of a sudden it flashed upon me that there were no caterpillars' nests in them! Then

I ceased to wonder at their odd look. It spoke well for my botanical acumen that I had recognized them at all.

Before I had been a week in Tallahassee I found that, without forethought or plan, I had dropped into the habit (and how pleasant it is to think that some good habits can be dropped into!) of making the St. Augustine road my after-dinner sauntering-place. The morning was for a walk: to Lake Bradford, perhaps, in search of a mythical ivory-billed woodpecker, or westward on the railway for a few miles, with a view to rare migratory warblers. But in the afternoon I did not walk,—I loitered; and though I still minded the birds and flowers, I for the most part forgot my botany and ornithology. In the cool of the day, then (the phrase is an innocent euphemism), I climbed the hill, and after an hour or two on the plateau strolled back again, facing the sunset through a vista of moss-covered live-oaks and sweet gums. Those quiet, incurious hours are among the pleasantest of all my Florida memories. A cuckoo would be cooing, perhaps; or a quail, with cheerful ambiguity,— such as belongs to weather predictions in general,—would be prophesying "more wet" and "no more wet" in alternate breaths; or two or three night-hawks would be sweeping back and forth high above the valley; or a marsh hawk would be quartering over the big oatfield. The martins would be cackling, in any event, and the kingbirds practicing their aerial mock somersaults; and the mocking-bird would be singing, and the redbird whistling. On the western slope, just below the oatfield, the Northern woman who owned the pretty cottage there (the only one on the road) was sure to be at work among her flowers. A laughing colored boy who did chores for her (without injury to his health, I could warrant) told me that she was a Northerner. But I knew it already; I needed no witness but her beds of petunias. In the valley, as I crossed the railroad track, a loggerhead shrike sat, almost of course, on the telegraph wire in dignified silence; and just beyond, among the cabins, I had my choice of mocking-birds and orchard orioles. And so, admiring the roses and the pomegranates, the lantanas and the honeysuckles, or chatting with some dusky fellow-pilgrim, I mounted the hill to the city, and likely as not saw before me a red-headed woodpecker sitting on the roof of the State House, calling attention to his patriotic self—in his tri-colored dress—by occasional vigorous tattoos on the tinned ridgepole. I

On the Road to St. Augustine, Florida.

never saw him there without gladness. The legislature had begun its session in an economical mood,—as is more or less the habit of legislatures, I believe,—and was even considering a proposition to reduce the salary and mileage of its members. Under such circumstances, it ought not to have been a matter of surprise, perhaps, that no flag floated from the cupola of the capitol. The people's money should not be wasted. And possibly I should never have remarked the omission but for a certain curiosity, natural, if not inevitable, on the part of a Northern visitor, as to the real feeling of the South toward the national government. Day after day I had seen a portly gentleman—with an air, or with airs, as the spectator might choose to express it—going in and out of the State House gate, dressed ostentatiously in a suit of Confederate gray. He had worn nothing else since the war, I was told. But of course the State of Florida was not to be judged by the freak of one man, and he only a member of the "third house." And even when I went into the governor's office, and saw the original "ordinance of secession" hanging in a conspicuous place on the wall, as if it were an heirloom to be proud of, I felt no stirring of sectional animosity, thorough-bred Massachusetts Yankee and old-fashioned abolitionist as I am. A brave people can hardly be expected or desired to forget its history, especially when that history has to do with sacrifices and heroic deeds. But these things, taken together, did no doubt prepare me to look upon it as a happy coincidence when, one morning, I heard the familiar cry of the red-headed woodpecker, for the first time in Florida, and looked up to see him flying the national colors from the ridgepole of the State House. I did not break out with "Three cheers for the red, white, and blue!" I am naturally undemonstrative; but I said to myself that Melanerpes erythrocephalus was a very handsome bird.