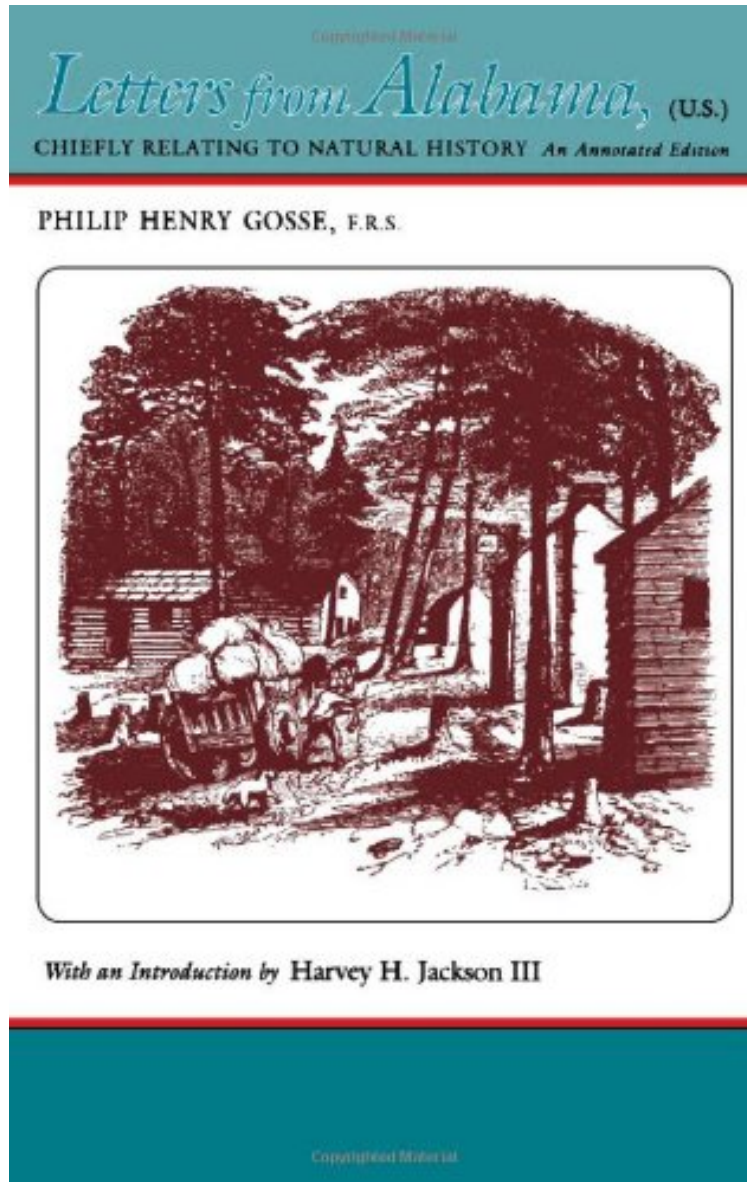


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## Letters from Alabama: Chiefly Relating to Natural History (Library Alabama Classics)

*Philip Henry Gosse*

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Philip Henry Gosse (1810-1888), a British naturalist, left home at age 17 and made his way to Alabama in 1838, where he had heard educated people were in demand. He was employed by Judge Reuben Saffold at Pleasant Hill in Dallas County as a teacher for about a dozen children of local landowners, but his principal interest was natural history. During the eight months he lived in the Black Belt he watched, listened, thought, took notes, and made sketches--activities that eventually led to *Letters from Alabama*. He lived among Alabamians, talked and listened to them, saw them at their best and their worst, and came to understand their hopes and fears. They were a part of the natural world, and he paid attention to them as any good scientist would. With the skills of a scientist and the temperament of an artist, Gosse set down an account of natural life in frontier Alabama that has no equal. Written to no one in particular, a common literary device of the period, the letters were first published in a magazine, and in 1859 appeared as a book. By that time Gosse was an established scholar and one of England's most noted scientific illustrators.

About the Author Harvey H. Jackson is Professor and Chair of the Department of History at Jacksonville State University.