

THE ALLIGATOR.

Could you ever imagine such a stupid, lazy-looking creature being selected for a pet! Yet in Louisiana and Florida it has been tamed and petted. Stranger still it has been worshipped as a god for the "sacred crocodile" of the East; is the same as its prototype in the Western world if we except a want of firmness in the scales. Long ago, when Egypt was a prosperous country, vast temples were built in its honor. In Thebes, that great city, it was fed on all manner of delicacies, and adorned with costly trinkets, and the silly people even covered its scales with gold leaf. It was then, no doubt, a strangely beautiful object; at least the beautiful Egyptian queen felt complimented when Antony called her his "serpent of old Nile." But this creature was not only loaded with favors while living, but embalmed after death. Near an ancient city there are now remaining huge grottoes cut in the limestone in which are great numbers of these mummies.

We will not attempt to state the exact length attained by the old patriarchs in their favorite swamps, but we do know that they are generally over-estimated. Ordinary alligators vary from six to twelve feet. Their feet and legs are small and feeble, and seem disproportioned to their bodies.

Ugly as the alligator unquestionably is, its eyes are really beautiful, they called forth from Job one of the most striking figures of Eastern imagery, he says they are "like the eyelids of the morning," some travelers think them as deserving the attention of the poets as the eyes of the gazelle. The ancients thought the alligator had no tongue; the great historian Herodotus says this was why it was worshipped by the Egyptians—as an emblem of mystery, but upon examination there is found in its mouth an unformed mass of flesh, which modern scientists pronounce a tongue.

Those long jaws are not one solid bone for then they might be easily broken, but are made up of sections bound together as the string binds a cross-bow. The principal food of the alligator is fish, and its "mission" is to assist in destroying the many millions thrown up by the rivers in the annual overflow.

The noise that the alligator makes is not unlike the grunting of a good-natured hog, but at times it resembles a lion's roar, and listening attentively you can feel the air vibrate. No wonder that those ancient people of the Nile were awed by the voice of their god waking up the waters of the still unexplored river, and echoing through the mysterious gloom of their wild forests.

Mr. James Lamont, one of the most eminent of English geographers, writes to the London Times a letter about the pole, in which he says: "I beg to express my firm belief, founded on all I have seen, on all I have heard, and on all I have read, that all around the north pole, as around the south pole there lies an eternal mass of ice a thousand miles in diameter and perhaps miles thick in the centre. And, further, I do not believe that either ship, sledge, man, beast, bird, or balloon will ever get across it."

HOW MARK TWAIN LOOKS.

Mark Twain looks like anything but a humorist. Two deep wrinkles between the eyebrows mar a face otherwise as fresh and fair as a boy's. His slight figure, his nervous way of twitching his hands and stroking his moustache, and the apparent embarrassment of his manners, suggests a modest clerk or an overworked book-keeper. He rarely laughs, at least openly, although his friends say he constantly grins internally at the funny people and situations that force themselves on his busy brain.—Hartford Letter.

Two smugglers adopted the ingenious plan of building a store at Trout river, just on the Canada line. One door opened into Canada and the other into New York State.



DEEDS OF KINDNESS.

How many deeds of kindness
A little child may do,
Although it has so little strength,
And little wisdom too.
Suppose the little breezes,
Upon a summer's day,
Should think themselves too small to cool
The traveler on his way.
Who would not miss the smallest
And softest ones that blow,
And think they made a great mistake
If they were talking so?
It wants a lovely spirit,
Much more than strength, to prove
How many things a child may do
For others by his love.

ALAS, POOR TODDIE.

Among the sudden marvels of the book-world in the last few months was the achievement of a pleasant writer who imitated the gentle act of the Master, when "He took a child and set him before them." Toddie and Budge have been for some months on their travels as "Helen's Babies," and bid fair to journey as widely as the English language is spoken. And now that, within a day or two past, it is known that a fatherly heart guided that writer's pen, and that it was a study of his own household pet, and that now Toddie is dead, snatched away one night of the present week from a Brooklyn home by one of the sudden maladies of infancy, the intelligence will move thousands of hearts to sadness, as at a common loss. But Toddie has not lived in vain. He will be always Toddie, never to part with the attractive graces of infancy, and widely and long be a missionary of young childhood, inspiring in human hearts and homes admiration and love, and the patience that oftentimes is the less easily wrought setting of both, when their subject is a restless and active-minded sprite, a human interrogation point. In many households there is a memory of Toddie, or some other of his school, like him departed. Happier those where the lost one is simply translated, than they who see their household pet more completely lost and overgrown in the vices that too often assail these little folk when their feet have grown firmer in the paths of the world, and have taken up its grossness and soiling.—Brooklyn Union.

"Did you do nothing to resuscitate the body?" was asked of a witness at a coroner's inquest. Yes, sir. We searched the pockets," was the reply.

TRYING HIS MEN.

The battle of San Jacinto, by which Texas gained her independence, was fought on April 21, 1836. Gen Houston commanded the Texans and Santa Anna the Mexicans.

On the morning of the battle, Deaf Smith, the commander of a spy company, suggested to Gen Houston that it was expedient to burn a bridge over a bayou, some eight or nine miles distant, to prevent the advance of reinforcements to the Mexicans.

"Can you do it?" asked Gen. Houston, "without being cut to pieces by the Mexican cavalry?" "Give me six men," replied Smith, "and I will try."

"Take them." Returning to his company, Smith said, "I want six men. I am going to burn the bridge. I want six men who are willing to follow me through, or perish in the attempt."

Six horsemen rode forward as volunteers. They passed within gun-shot of the rear of the Mexican cavalry, reached the bridge, burnt it, and set out on their return to the camp. Reaching a deep, dry hollow, about three-quarters of a mile from the main army, Smith ordered a halt.

"I will ride up the high ground," he said to his men, "far enough to see whether any of the Mexican horsemen are near, so that we may avoid them."

The men saw their captain ride forward a hundred yards or so, and then, dropping suddenly down on his horse's neck, gallop towards them.

"What news?" they asked as he came up.

"The prairie is full of Mexican cavalry." Eyeing each man as if he would look him through, the captain asked, "What shall we do?"

"You are our leader!" cried the men. "We will follow where you lead."

"I shall not go back. My orders are to return to the camp, and I will do it or die in the attempt. If any man wishes to make his escape, I now give him permission."

"Lead on. We follow."

"Are your arms all right? We will go down the dry hollow to where it joins the bayou, and then, in Indian file, run to the level ground above. Then we shall be not a hundred yards from the enemy. When discovered, we'll raise the Texan yell, and charge at full speed through their line. They will, no doubt, kill

me, my boys! But I will make an opening for the rest of you to pass.

The men rode in Indian file after their leader, each one determined to cut his way through the Mexicans or die in the effort. Through the dry hollow they passed up on the high level ground, and saw—not a Mexican horseman, but their own camp near by.

The hearty laugh of Deaf Smith revealed to the brave men that their leader had been putting their courage to the test,—though not in an honorable way.—Youth's Companion.

SWEET MYSTERY

It is not detracting from some of the great revival preaching of these times, to say that, as far as human means are concerned, the sweet mystery of music is the right arm of its power. Circumstances had prevented our attending any of these meetings, but a reason for their mighty results was made very clear by the following circumstance.

After the usual morning service in one of the Brooklyn churches a few months since, the minister introduced the choir-leader of the then recent Moody and Sankey meetings in New York City. He led the audience in a half-hour "praise-meeting," which must ever be a tender spot in memory to all who were present. There were many dewy eyes among the people as their hearts were raised to the Mount on the wings of such touching sacred song as is not often heard on earth. It was experience to all present which left no ground for wonder why Saul had the spirit of evil calmed within him by the sweet mystery of the strains of Judah's Royal Minstrel.

Sometimes, as we sit in the gloaming and muse on these things, we wonder if the churches would not be the portals to heaven for many more than they are, if their singing was led by those souls fired from the pure altar of God's love, instead of from the lights of the operahouse. We wonder, too, if there are not some who hope they have found the pearl of great price, to whose stewardship the precious talent of musical genius and culture have been committed, who are hiding it in the napkin of indolence. Perhaps, if some such would listen, they would hear the still small voice of conscience calling them to go and use this talent in Mission Sabath-schools and in neighborhood prayer-meetings. It may be that golden harvests are waiting in such fields for their reaping, 'mid the ripple of songs that shall bear redeemed ones on and on to the banks of the river of life. Sure we are that such work is waiting for some who may well accept it thankfully and earnestly, asking the Master to permit and to help them to do it, and do it faithfully and humbly.—Church Union.

A nervous man, whose life was made miserable by the chattering of two blacksmiths, prevailed upon each of them to remove, by the offer of liberal compensation. When the money was paid down he kindly inquired what neighborhood they intended to remove to. "Why, sir," replied Jack, with a grin. "Tom Smith moves to my shop, and I move to his."

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