

WOOL TURNED WHITE.

AWFUL EXPERIENCE OF A NEGRO BESET BY ALLIGATORS.

He Spent the Greater Part of Twenty-four Hours on a Stump in a Deep Swamp—He Held a Pig on His Back and Was Surrounded by Hungry Saurians.

On the edge of a little take about ten or twelve miles northwest of Tallahassee, there lives an old negro whom I saw and with whom I talk every time I go hunting in that direction. At least I have always supposed he was aged, for though his wife is a buxom young woman, he is white haired, though hale and hearty in appearance. The last time I was out there I learned that he was quite young, only about forty in fact, and that his snowy locks had a history. After urging I prevailed on him to tell me the story.

It seems that during the war this negro, Ben Aiken, had run off, and while hiding out in the woods subsisted as best he could on wild fruits, some game, young corn, and an occasional chicken if he was so fortunate as to find one far enough away from a plantation.

One day he happened to slip up on a half grown pig and, getting close enough, knocked it over, and at once struck it with his knife and started off with his improvised hut. While picking his way through the swamp and going from one little mound to another, stepping on logs and stumps and cypress knees, he noticed that one log he was just in the act of stepping on was not a log at all, but quite a vicious looking crocodile.

He had lived long enough amongigators to feel no particular uneasiness over this one, though he also knew that they are mean to have around. Ben stepped back to the mound he was on (which was only about ten or twelve feet square) and concluded to wait till the alligator creature moved on. But the gator after awhile aroused itself, and in company with four or five others started toward Ben.

The negro concluded to beat a retreat, when he found that his little island was entirely surrounded by alligators, and he then realized that they had been attracted by the slant he was carrying, which had left a trail of blood behind him.

ALLIGATORS ON EVERY SIDE. The darky was now thoroughly frightened. He saw the alligators crowding around his little island; he knew that at night, if he came up after him, he had no weapon except a knife, and a club; he knew there was no chance of any one hearing his cries, and it was now nearly sundown. A half grown alligator came crawling up toward him and he brained it with a club, but it gave him no consolation, for he knew he could not keep that up through the night.

There was one cypress knee or stump on the mound which rose about five feet or more, but he doubted his ability to get upon its smooth top, and even if he got there he didn't think he could keep his place there long. Besides, it was doubtful even if he would be out of reach of their jaws. Being the only chance, however, he tried it, and found that by close attention and sitting in a very cramped position he could keep his place upon the stump.

Night came on and he became sleepy. He dare not close his eyes. He did everything possible to keep himself awake. Finally, captivity itself would be a blessed relief compared with this, and he called long and loud for help hour after hour. He knew it was of no use, but he kept it up.

At last the first grey streaks of dawn were seen, and presently came the day. His little mound was covered with alligators, and the swamp seemed alive with them. He tried to frighten them away, so that he could at least get down and scratch his limbs, but they crawled all around him, glaring up at him, opening their horrid mouths for the feast they knew was coming.

The hot rays of the sun were becoming unendurable, for he had kept up his calling for help until his throat and mouth seemed parched.

RESCUED BY A SIBERIAN DOG. He had all this time kept the pig in his arms, and now, in slightly altering his position, it dropped to the ground. At once an enormous alligator from each side rushed toward it. It was the signal of battle, and a grunting threat from each was followed by the onset. Never did any one witness such a combat.

The enormous teeth and powerful jaws crushing on matted side, back and head, the final advantage gained by one in a grip under the neck, and the fearful struggle of the other, the terrible strokes of each with his long tail, and the resounding echoes through the swamp—all joined with Ben's hoarse cry for help, made a din and commotion that almost deafened Mr. Aiken and his men, who now appeared upon the scene.

A crowd that had been out soon hunting the night before had been frightened by Ben's cries, and reporting it at the house Mr. Aiken concluded it must be his runaway hand, and so took a crowd of men and started after him and now came upon the scene. The battle between the alligators was finished, and the conqueror was at once also killed.

The others were driven away, and Ben was taken off his perch, a chattering, chattering idiot. A week's rest restored him to his normal condition, however, except his kinky hair. That has always remained as white as the whitest hair of cotton on the plantation.—Cor. St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Facts About the Heads of Criminals.

The belief of some anthropologists is that the criminal section of mankind is distinguished by certain definite physical characteristics which are susceptible of study and classification. Generally speaking, they assert, the habitual criminal is undersized, his weight being disproportioned to his height, with a tendency to flat footedness. He is heavy in his movements, lacking anatomical symmetry and beauty. Particularly, his head is not symmetrical.

Indeed, want of symmetry as to the head and face is surprisingly prevalent in criminals, as it is also in the insane. It is so usual that a collection of portraits of thieves and murderers has all the effect of a series of caricatures. The sugar loaf shape of head is the predominant type, and the length and breadth of the face are both excessive. Curiously enough, the average weight of the noncriminal type is greater than that of the noncriminal type.—Washington Star.

A Regimental Tiger Cub.

In the hot season of 1899 two officers of the Fifth Lancers—Captains Chaffy and Thackwell—were on a shooting expedition in the Terai encountered a fine tigress with cubs. They killed the tigress, but not until she had severely lacerated Captain Thackwell's arm—so severely, indeed, as to render amputation necessary, the operation, unhappily, resulting in the death of the unfortunate officer. The two cubs were captured and taken to Lucknow, where they used to play about the Fifth Lancers' mess. One, however, choked himself with a lump of raw meat which he had purloined. The surviving cub was presented by Captain Chaffy to the Madras Fusiliers, who gave him the name of "Plassey" and constituted him the regimental pet.

Plassey became very tame and was on most friendly terms with the men. He lived at the officers' mess, and when allowed to be at large he amused himself by stalking a small donkey, which was wont to wander about the mess compound. He was also introduced to a fine tiger and a dog, with whom he lived amicably while

the regiment remained in India. Plassey accompanied the One Hundred and Second to England, being granted a free passage by the captains of her majesty's ships Junnand Homelajo. Two young leopards and a canine ally were his fellow passengers.

Plassey landed with the regiment at Dover, where suitable quarters were provided for him in the main fosse of the citadel, beneath the officers' mess. There Plassey lived a happy life with his friend the dog, his "personal attendant" being the adjutant's groom, who fed and looked after him. At meal time Plassey always allowed the dog to have the first "go in," but when he thought his canine companion had taken a fair share he would give him a gentle pat with his paw as a reminder.

When Plassey was nearly full grown and in the zenith of his popularity with the Fusiliers an old lady resident of Dover wrote to the general commanding the district and stated that she had "seen Plassey disembark," and that ever since she had remained a prisoner in her house, fearing to go out lest Plassey should have escaped and be roaming about the town! So frequent were this old lady's letters and complaints that at last the general felt compelled to take notice of them, and so poor Plassey was sent off to the zoological gardens, accompanied in exile by his faithful dog.—London Art Journal.

CATCHING TROUT BY HAND.

An Old Trick That is Frequently Played on the Unsuspecting Tourist.

One day a well dressed man visited a certain hamlet, carrying the newest of fly rods. He intended to fish for trout. Could any one give him information as to the best place for his day's sport? As he asked for it at the bar of the small inn of the hamlet, the information was soon forthcoming. One of the customers there told him he knew where there was a big one, and all he had to do was to catch it. The bait took.

After a generous "liquor up" and the tip of a shilling after they started. He saw the fish, and for nearly the whole of a day he thrashed that water hard enough to frighten all the trout that ever swim in it. But even a fish the size of a sprat did not escape him.

At the inn, before his train started, as he rested for an hour, his guide of the morning appeared and asked him what sport he had had. "Not a single fish," replied he, although, "I would send half a sovereign in drinks if that trout lay in my basket, or give that sum to any one who would put me up to getting it there." Five minutes later the native whispered to him, "Did you mean what ye said?"

The angler pulled out half a sovereign and showed it to him. "Here take a bit," said the man, "but don't start yet." In less than half an hour the stranger was beckoned out of the bar to see the big trout, still alive and kicking vigorously, on some flag in a basket. He had a hook attached to a piece of broken gut in his upper lip, but a bribe or a mark was on him.

"Take him, basket an all, for what ye said," quoth the native, "and a precious sight too big to go into that cesspool of yours. And I be sorry much obliged to you for this ere half sov'rin, and no mistake." I was informed afterward that the fish had been so frightened by the thrashing of that would be angler that he had retreated to the utmost limit of his hover under the bank, and there he had remained, as only a trout would remain.

The rate taker knew this would be so, and he had simply gone down to the spot, taken off his shoes and jerked up his trousers and "poked" him out. That is how most of the great trout are captured, but I never saw one that had been groped for that was not shown with a hook in its mouth. A gut hook does not cut much, and it looks so very much better. "Vile poisoning!" No, that was waste land where the big trout was got out.—Blackwood's Magazine.

The First Baptism.

It was the first Sunday after my ordination, and my rector said to me: "Well, there will be a baptism in this afternoon's service. You may as well take it. It will be a beginning for you." "Very well," was my humble and somewhat tremulous reply.

The preliminaries of the baptismal office were over, it remained but to "name this child" and "baptize" it. Alas! it was more easily said than done, for the baby had a word to say against it. Yes, for he was eighteen months old, and could talk and walk. On that fact for a first christening by a nervous man! I scolded him for it had to be a forcible grasp to perform my office. The rebel kicked and plunged like a frisky colt, twisted and twined like a slippery eel, rolled with all the power of his limbs, and was deaf and indifferent to the persuasive powers of his maternal relative. I held him aloft by main force, and dipping my hand in the water, began the sprinkling.

But he took his revenge. What whiskers I had he seized on and held fast to with one hand, fighting manfully with the other. The poor little chap was sorely frightened, no doubt, and perhaps in my anxious nervousness I had not been as careful of his feelings as I might have been. How I said the words, or whether they were ever said, I know not, so great was the noise and no tumultuous were my feelings.

With a crimson face, and bathed in perspiration, I disentangled his fist from my whiskers and gave him up to those who belonged to him, very glad to get rid of him, while I meekly concluded the service conscious of amusement and titillation among the congregation at the new curate's first christening.—London Tit-Bits.

Every Child a Poet.

The love of money and the love of every thing else but nature is acquired; it is a matter of education. No boy sees any charm in business. If he had his pockets full of money he would spend it all, or give it away. What for? A gun and fishing rod, a dog and a horse, a boat and a lunch basket; then he would start for the woods or the lakes. When you come to sift it down the child is born with no other passion but a love of nature. As for rainbows and storms, he may not prefer the latter; but it is impossible to find a child that does not go into ecstasies over a rainbow. How often have I seen them stand in wrapt delight as the storm swept eastward at night, and the setting sun, after filling the valley with gold, painted a double bow across the rear of the clouds.

More than this, and involved in it, is the great truth that every child is a poet. It takes a good deal of sobering down and compulsion to bring a boy or girl into blank prose. Up to about eighteen a child has a free home, and not too much repression, thinks and feels only poems. This is one reason why childhood is best with dangers, because the young creatures see everything high colored.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

New Yorkers Are Great Readers.

"What do you notice most about the people of New York?" was asked of a girl who was making her first visit to the metropolis. "That everybody reads newspapers," was the prompt reply. "The laborers going home with their tails at night are reading the last edition, the girls, who school books under their arms, are reading morning and evening; the women in the elevated trains are always reading; the messenger boys and the newsboys read, and sometimes I see a man who stops a newsboy and buys every evening paper that is published in the city. I never saw a city where everybody from prince to pauper took so much stock in the newspapers."—New York Recorder.

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