

grass covered a good deal of the sand, but here and there the wind had swept it up into great piles round some obstacle that broke the level, and on these sand-hills wild vines grew luxuriantly, covering them in many places with thick and graceful foliage, and small purple clusters of grapes. There were pools, too, in some places, where water-lilies had managed to plant themselves, and where colonies of mud-turtles lived undisturbed; and there were shady places by the sides of the pools, where the brown pitcher-plant held its cups of clear water, and the ghost-flower glimmered spectrally among the dead leaves of last year. But the plain generally was hot and sunny in summer, and very dreary in winter; for the larger trees which grew upon it were oak's, and when they were bare of foliage, and the sand-hills and the pools had a deep covering of snow, the wind swept icily cold over its wide space. In September the oaks were still in leaf, and the grass green, and, though they were but stunted in size and coarse in texture, both were pleasant to look at. The sunshine was no longer hot, but it was serenely bright, and there was as lovely a blue overhead as if the equinox were months away.