



A TREETOP TRAGEDY.

A TREETOP TRAGEDY.

I was sitting under a beautiful elm tree on the banks of the Niagara River a few days ago, drinking in the delicious air and enjoying the exquisite view, when my attention was attracted by a strange noise in the branches of the tree. Looking up I saw a bright little squirrel, apparently trying to open a conversation. He was looking down at me with his twinkling eyes, his pretty tail was waving gracefully behind him and he was chattering so fast I could not understand a word of his gibberish. But he was so friendly I smiled and nodded at him. Suddenly he seemed to think he had made a mistake—I was not after all the person he thought me—and away he whirled like an arrow.

Who could help loving these happy little fellows? But they have their work and their troubles too. In our country they have not so many enemies as the squirrels of lands further south. In our picture we see the terrible robber that sometimes steals into their nests. What horror to look up and find such wicked eyes gleaming so close to your head and to feel the cold fangs about you, knowing that you have no weapon of defence! Poor little fellows! They must leave their pretty home with all its winter store of nuts and run, run away swift as the swallow flies, if they would save their lives.

"When a boy," said a prominent member of a church, "I was much helped by Bishop Hamline, who visited at a house where I was. Taking me aside, the Bishop said: 'When in trouble, my boy, kneel down and ask God's help; but never climb over the fence into the devil's ground, and then kneel down and ask help. Pray from God's side of the fence.' Of that I have thought every day of my life since."

A DAY WITH THE ALLIGATORS.

BY COUSIN FRANK.

I want to tell the young folks who read *Happy Days* something of my visit to Florida. We first went to Jacksonville, which lies on the St. John's River, and is a very pleasant city.

One day, as I sat in the reading room of the hotel, I heard shouts of laughter, followed by the clapping of hands. "What can it be?" thought I, throwing down the newspaper I was reading, and running into the corridor.

There I saw five or six little reptiles, about half the length of my arm, that seemed to be running a race over the canvas carpet with which the floor was covered. A number of people were looking on. They appeared to be highly amused by the queer movements of the creatures.

"What are they? Lizards?" cried I.

"Lizards! No; they are young alligators," said a little girl, in a tone that implied pity for my ignorance.

"Alligators!" said I, retreating in alarm, as one of them came towards me.

"Oh, you coward!" cried the little girl, laughing. "They are too small to hurt you. See me." And, saying this, she took one of them up in her apron, and brought it to me.

These little alligators grow to be huge creatures, sometimes more than twenty feet long. They live in the creeks and little rivers that run into the St. John's. They rarely go very far from the shore. They live partly on land and partly in the water.

In Florida the weather in January is often quite as warm as it is in Canada in June. So on a fine winter day we went on board the steamer *Mayflower* for a trip upon the St. John's River, and up some of the small streams, where alligators may be found.

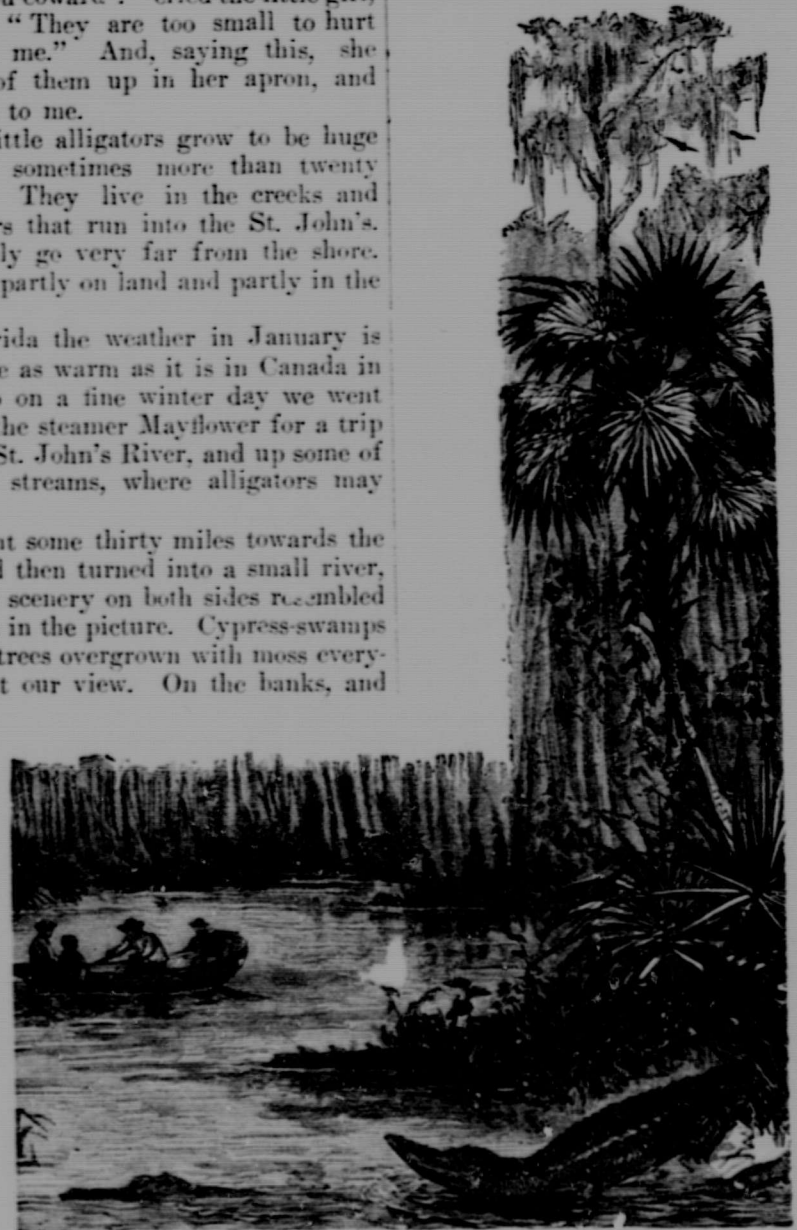
We went some thirty miles towards the south, and then turned into a small river, where the scenery on both sides resembled that given in the picture. Cypress-swamps and high trees overgrown with moss everywhere met our view. On the banks, and

generally on fallen logs, might be seen alligators basking in the sun.

Many of the passengers in the steamboat had brought pistols and guns, with which to fire at the poor alligators. This is a very cruel and useless sport, for the alligators do no harm to anybody. I saw ladies and young girls firing at them. We passed some fifty alligators on our way.

Father and another gentleman took a boat, and rowed some distance up a creek. There we saw an alligator with a young one by its side. The young are very small, compared with the full-grown reptile. You can see from the picture that the alligator is not handsome; but that is no reason why bullets should be lodged in its hide. I came to the conclusion that firing pistols at these animals was poor and mean sport.

What a lovely day it was! and how we enjoyed the excursion! Just think of sitting in your summer clothing on a day in January, and passing through scenery where the trees and shrubs are all green. We returned to Jacksonville just in time to see the sun set, and we shall not soon forget our visit among the alligators.



A DAY WITH THE ALLIGATORS.