

and so shall your heart for ever afterward interpret Ocklawaha to mean repose.

Some twenty miles from the mouth of the Ocklawaha, at the right-hand edge of the stream, is the handsomest residence in America. It belongs to a certain alligator of my acquaintance, a very honest and worthy saurian, of good repute. A little cove of water, dark-green under the overhanging leaves, placid, pellucid, curves round at the river-edge into the flags and lilies with a curve just heartbreaking for the pure beauty of the flexure of it. This house of my saurian is divided into apartments—little subsidiary bays which are scalloped out by the lily-pads according to the sinuous fantasies of their growth. My saurian, when he desires to sleep, has but to lie down anywhere: he will find marvellous mosses for his mattress beneath him; his sheets will be white lily-petals; and the green disks of the lily-pads will rise above him as he sinks and embroider themselves together for his coverlet. He never quarrels with his cook, he is not the slave of a kitchen, and his one house-maid, the stream, for ever sweeps his chambers clean. His conservatories there under the glass of that water are ever and without labour filled with the enchantments of strange under-water growths: his parks and his pleasure-grounds are bigger than any king's. Upon my saurian's house the winds have no power, the rains are only a new delight to him, and the snows he will never see: regarding fire, as he does not employ its slavery, so he does not fear its tyranny. Thus, all the elements are the friends of my saurian's house. While he sleeps he is being bathed: what glory to awake sweet and clean, sweetened and cleaned in the very act of sleep! Lastly, my saurian has unnumbered mansions, and can change his dwelling as no human householder may. It is but a mere flip of his tail, and, lo! he is established in another palace, as good as the last, ready furnished to his liking.

For many miles together the Ocklawaha is, as to its main channel, a river without banks, though not less clearly defined as a stream for that reason. The swift deep current meanders between tall lines of forests: beyond these, on both sides, there is water also—a thousand shallow runlets lapsing past the bases of multitudes of trees. Along the immediate edges of the stream every tree-trunk, sapling, stump or other projecting coign of vantage is wrapped about with a close-growing vine. At first, like an unending procession of nuns disposed along the aisle of a church these vine-figures stand. But presently, as one journeys, this nun-imagery fades out of one's mind: a thousand other fancies float with ever-new vine-shapes into one's eyes. One sees repeated all the forms one has ever known, in grotesque juxtapositions. Look! here is a graceful troop of girls, with arms wreathed over their heads, dancing down into the water; here are high velvet arm-chairs and lovely green