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ALLIGATOR, MIMICS.

HOW SWAMP RANGERS CALL AND CAPTURE THE REPTILES.

The following season and the fight of the Unmated Bulls—How Nests are Built and Eggs Hatched—Familiar Habits of Feeding.

The alligator is rapidly disappearing in the settled regions of Florida and becoming scarcer every day even in those remote regions as the Everglades, owing to the war of extermination waged against it by hunters, taxidermists and dealers in curiosities. These pursue it night and day year in and year out. The little gingerskins just out of the nest are in great demand, as they are worth from \$2 to \$3 per hundred in the local market. The "curio" dealers who purchase them often resell them at \$1 each to northern visitors, or else they kill and stuff them into card plates, cigar holders or whatever else they fancy suggests and dispose of them at good prices. The young are frequently lured from their lurking places by a poor imitation of the grunts of their mother, and men expert in mimicking the sound capture a large number in a day, as they respond promptly to the calls and pour out of cavities in hot haste to see the caller. The most expert "gator callers" I ever knew were swamp rangers, both white and black, who were born and bred within a short distance of an alligator swamp, and therefore knew every intonation of the saurian's voice. One could make a mason charge wildly at them across a broad stream by imitating the frightened cries of her young or lure a decrepit old bull by mimicking the grunts of the female. They could in fact delude both old and young and often earned good sums by their art.

The "bellowing season" begins in May and lasts until the middle of July, and during that time the unmated bulls make night hideous. In fighting each other they use jaw and tail with the utmost fury. They must deliver exceedingly heavy blows with the latter, for the sound can be heard at a considerable distance. When one gets a good mouth hold on the other, it clings like a bulldog, but as the body armor is generally toothproof, except in special places, little damage can be done even in a protracted conflict.

As the reptiles can only deliver blows at objects a little to one side of the head, it is amusing to see them try to get directly in front of each other and make circular sweeps with the tail in the blind hope that some may prove effective. I have known them to fight for hours at intervals with great fury and have again seen a huge bull retreat in a demoralized manner after receiving a few blows.

When the female is ready to lay her eggs, she retires to some secluded wet swampy place and builds out of mud, decayed vegetation and rushes a nest two or three feet high and having a large, firm base. If she builds on tide-water, she carries her nest farther back—some years more than others—as if she knew when tides would be unusually high, and the strongest part of it is that, as a rule, "high nests and high tides" go together. The receptacle for the eggs is made of mud and well made. She lays from 20 to 100 eggs in this, usually in July, covering them with light, loose material to give the young when hatched, plenty of room, and makes the upper part solid by beating with her head and walking over it several times to trample it down. She frequently walks over it while the eggs are incubating, in order to keep it packed, for if it became loose the rain would enter and prevent the eggs from hatching.

It usually takes 60 days for the young to appear, and she evidently keeps watch for their coming, for she keeps passing about the nest the day when they are expected, becomes nervous, usually irritable, and as pugnacious that she is ready to fight. When the young hatch, she usually takes them to her nursery, and heeding the young give their first faint croak she begins tearing away the covering with claws and jaws, and on reaching them give several ear-splitting grunts, then promptly leads them to her cave in the swamp, stream or lake close by. From that moment forward she must vigilantly watch her progeny to prevent them from being destroyed by enemies, for everything that eats flesh seems to prey upon them. Fishes, snakes, owls, hawks, polecats and turtles devour them whenever they can, but their worst foes are the bull alligators, for they destroy them out of mere wantonness.

One of the peculiarities of the eggs of an alligator is that they are generally of different shapes, although the ends are always alike. They are about 1½ inches in diameter, and the ordinary length of the newly hatched youngsters is four inches. These do not eat any food for several days after leaving the nest, and make a beginning on larvae, water insects and frogs, gradually advancing to snakes, fishes and finally to anything edible. They cannot eat food that requires tearing apart, owing to the shortness and irregularity of their teeth. An adult saurian possesses 80 teeth, if it has not lost any by accident, and no two are of the same size and shape, except those opposite each other. That is why it cannot tear fresh flesh and must allow it to rot to putrefy before it can be eaten. The teeth are hollow, yet strong, and are shed every year, so that the loss of a few in a conflict produces no permanent injury. Both old and young catch their prey by lying in wait for it and striking it suddenly with the tail when it approaches near enough to be seized. Mouth and tail work automatically together, for the caudal blow promptly knocks the prey into the distended, awaiting jaws. That given, the saurian backs off into deep water and begins rolling over and over like a barrel or spinning round and round in a circle for the purpose of suffocating its captive as speedily as possible. It then takes its prey to some favorite resting place and until it becomes tender enough, through putrefaction, to be easily torn apart.

John Mortimer Murphy in Popular Science News.

Great Smokers.
Many visitors to Europe consider it a high honor to be invited to visit the Rookers' club at Bruges. At the smoking contents of this organization, a stated quantity of tobacco is given to each member, and the one who takes the most time in smoking his portion wins the prize. When the pipe goes out, the competitor is counted out, and no relighting is allowed. The present record for a quarter ounce of tobacco is 91 minutes.—London Letter.

A Case Calling For Discretion.
Smith—One can't always judge a man's patriotism by his conversation.
Jones—No, I suppose not.
Smith—Take Brown, for instance. Would you call him a coward?
Jones—Well—I might if I was sure he wouldn't fight.—Chicago News.

PRUNE JUICE IN WHISKY.

It Makes New Liquor Taste as if It Had Been Mellowed by Age.

If one looks over the advertisements in the newspapers devoted to the interests of the liquor trade, his curiosity is likely to be aroused by seeing many advertisements of prune juice for sale. As prune juice is not among the things which the barroom offers to its patrons, the person of inquiring mind is naturally led to wonder why it is advertised and what part it plays in the preparation of alcoholic beverages. An explanation of the uses of prune juice was recently printed in The Liquor Trades Journal.

The object of using prune juice in blending whiskies is to remove the unpleasant smell which is characteristic of new liquors, to take off what may be termed the rough edge and to produce by artificial means the ripe, mellow flavor which otherwise comes only with age. It is an undeniable fact that a good prune juice will transform a rough, new whisky into a smooth, palatable liquor, while it would puzzle even an expert to decide that its mellowness had not been acquired by age.

"Naturally any material which produces such results is a valuable aid to blenders, and consequently there is a vast quantity of it used annually, though there are many who prefer to use malaga, sherry, peach or some other compound, but one feels safe in saying that the uses of prune juice are in a majority."

There are several New York firms engaged in the manufacture of prune juice, while others import it from Europe. The basis of all the better brands of prune juice is a light fermented wine, to which are added certain proportions of sugar and prune extract, with sufficient high proof spirit to bring the mixture up to the desired alcoholic strength and coloring matter to give it the proper shade. Some manufacturers also use certain chemicals, regarding the propriety and effects of which they maintain a profound secrecy, each claiming for the article which they produce a superiority over all others.

However, the object of all is the same—viz, to supply a blending wine which will, with the least possible reduction in the proof, give to new whiskies the bouquet of aged goods.

HONEYMOON INCIDENT.

A Designing Bridegroom and an Ingenious Little Bride.
It is told how a happy couple were honeymooning in the country when the first packet of letters from home arrived, and the husband proposed to open one addressed to his wife.

"Certainly not," she said firmly.

"But, Philippa," he remonstrated, "surely you are not going to have any secrets from me now that we are married?"

"I don't have any secrets from you, but Philippa might," his wife said. "That letter is hers, not mine. I shall probably let you read it after I have, but not till I am sure that Philippa has told me nothing but what she would be willing for you to know."

"Still doesn't it imply a lack of confidence when a wife won't show her letters to her husband?"

"Not at all. The lack of confidence is shown by the husband when he demands to see his wife's letters."

This was unanswerable, and Mr. Grant took to his chair with amused delight in his wife's perfect pronouncement of having said a "good thing."

Presently she added: "I told you so. Here is something Philippa wouldn't want you to know."

"Then why are you going to tell me?"

"I'm not going to tell you what it is. You are only to know there is something you can't know—at present."

"Philippa is engaged," Mr. Grant remarked.

"And what if she is? You are not to know to whom?"

"To Radcliffe," hazarded her husband.

"I didn't say so."

"But you don't say she isn't."

"How could I say she isn't when she—"

"Is I really think, my dear, you might as well have let me read that letter!"

Fact and Fiction.

Fanning as an Art.

Sukoshi Bakari, a young Japanese gentleman who is spending some time in this country, has studied the habits of the American woman and has come to the conclusion that in one respect at least she is behind her oriental sister. She does not know how to fan herself properly. Mr. Bakari says the majority of American women rest their wrists on their bosoms and as the fan moves back and forth the breeze goes mostly up in the air, while the fair ones' faces catch only the outer edge of it.

In Japan, he says, the women hold their fans perpendicularly before their faces, and what little breeze is lost is not worth having. As to fans, Mr. Bakari says he has noticed quantities on exhibition in the stores claiming to be Japanese, which no Japanese woman would ever carry. Genuine Japanese folding fans always have perfectly plain wooden supports on the outside. No carvings or decorations are ever put there, because the oriental girls keep their fans when not in use in their shoes, and they like them to be perfectly smooth so as not to show the silks—Exchange.

No Distinguishing Marks.

"Were there any marks about him by which he could be described?" asked the detective.
"Yes," eagerly replied the father of the runaway boy, "his trousers were nearly worn through at the knees, and he had in one of his pockets as I heard my wife say a day or two ago, a knife with a broken blade, a pistol cartridge that had been fired off, a match, some of the wheels of an old watch, a leather shoestring, a broken key, a bunch of twine, two or three white pebbles, a piece of leaf, some buttons from the last bicycle shop, a stump of a lead pencil and a bit of red chalk."
And the detective wrote in his memorandum book, "No distinguishing marks."
—Chicago Tribune.

Disappointed.

"What's the matter with your friend, the musical theorist? Everybody applauded his new composition, and yet he seems very blue."
"Yes, he's pretty thoroughly discouraged. So many people liked it the first time they heard it that he says it can't possibly be good music."
—Washington Star.

"Don't Hang Round Here!"

"If you do not marry me, I shall hang myself!" exclaimed a lovelorn Denver young man.
"Well, if you do, please go down a block," was the deserting response. "I heard papa say he did not want you to hang around here."
—Denver Times.



If mothers would cast aside foolish prudery, and impart to their daughters the knowledge that they themselves have acquired by years of suffering, they would be forced to spend fewer hours of anxious attendance at the bedside of sick daughters. A woman who suffers from weakness, disease, or derangement of the distinctly female organs is an incomplete woman. She is unfitted for woman's highest and best duty—motherhood. She cannot be a happy mother. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the only proprietary medicine ever devised by an expert skilled specialist in woman's diseases for the one purpose of curing these troubles in the privacy of the home. It makes a woman strong and healthy in a womanly way, and can be relied upon to relieve motherhood of all peril and almost all pain. It insures healthy, robust children. It transforms weak, sickly, nervous invalids into healthy, happy wives and mothers.

Words fail to describe my suffering before I took Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and "Pleasant Pellets," writes Miss Lillie S. Hardy, of South Sea-Island, Rockingham Co., N. H.: "I could hardly walk across the room. I had an ache on the fallopian tube that discharged through the bladder. It left the bladder in an irritable condition and the uterus inflamed. I had an awful burning in my stomach; no appetite, wasting away; constipation; excruciating neuralgia; and backache all the time. I was confined to my bed five months. Then I commenced the use of your medicines and have been greatly benefited by them."

In paper covers, 50¢ each; stamps; for cloth binding, 90¢ each. Dr. Pierce's Common Sense Medical Adviser. Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

On the Eating of Loons.

Man is a creature of prejudice. In Scotland he will not eat eels; in Connecticut he will not eat sturgeon; the royal fish of England, where the first one taken in the Thames goes to the queen's table; in New York he will not eat lampreys, miscalled "lampreys eels," which are delicacies in Connecticut, and in England some old king—never could keep a record of kings—died from a surplus of lampreys. With these prejudices in mind, and I hate all prejudices except those which I entertain, I decided to eat the loon.

There may be differences among loons, as there are between pigeons and squabs. I prefer an adult pigeon to a squab, there is better chewing on it, but if a man wants raw hard chewing, with a flavor of raw fish, let him tackle an adult loon. That bird could not be picked. It was skinned, and in its stomach there was a catfish recently swallowed, a partly digested and the bones of another. The triggers of the pectoral fins of the catfish were set, but the stomach of the loon did not seem to be troubled by that fact.—Fred Mather in Forest and Stream.

A Baldheaded Reply.

A naval officer, very well and favorably known in London, had for some unknown reason been advanced in his profession very slowly, though he had grown gray in the service and indeed lamentably bald. Recently one of his juniors was bold enough to question him as to his remarkable absence of hair.

"How comes it that you are so very bald?"

The officer replied promptly and with much vivacity:
"You, man, you would be bald, I think, if you had had men stepping over your head for years in the way I have."
—London Judy.

Different Ideas as to Clothes.

If the native women of Sumatra have their knees properly covered, the rest does not matter. The natives of some islands off the coast of Guinea wear clothes only when they are going on a journey. Some Indians of Venezuela are ashamed to wear clothes before strangers, as it seems indecent to them to appear unclothed.

According to the Bible there will be no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven—probably because there won't be enough men to go around.



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