SCENES

IN A

SURVEYOR'S LIFE;

OR A

RECORD OF HARDSHIPS AND DANGERS ENCOUNTERED,
AND AMUSING SCENES WHICH OCCURRED,

IN THE

Operations of a Party of Surveyors

IN

SOUTH FLORIDA.

BY W. L. PERRY.

JACKSONVILLE:
C. DREW'S BOOK AND JOB PRINTING OFFICE.
1859.

PREFACE.

THIS little volume is respectfully offered to the public, not without some "misgivings" as to how it will be received. Trusting, however, to the kindness of the indulgent reader, it is sent forth with the sincere hope that it may contribute in some degree to the pleasure and amusement of those into whose hands it may chance to fall. If so, the author's object will have been attained. The following pages contain a record of the dangerous and exciting, as well as amusing scenes encountered by a party of surveyors in South and East Florida, whilst engaged in the labor of laying out the public domain. There is, perhaps, no class of men who endure so many hardships and privations—whose fortitude and energy, whose intellectual powers, are taxed to a greater extent than the Government surveyor in his operations in the wild forests of the Southern and Western portions of the United States, in paving the way for the future wealth and aggrandizement of his country; and yet there is no class of men, of useful occupation, who receive a less share of consideration and sympathy.

In justice to himself, the author feels called upon to plead the very unfavorable circumstances under which the

manuscript was written, arising from the fact that it was prepared at moments spared from the press of business, and not intended when first written as an offering to the public in the form of a book. This, then, is offered to the considerate reader as an apology for the very many imperfections which the volume contains. He is aware it should have been revised before it was handed over to the publisher; but his situation has been such as rendered it impossible for him to bestow the time and labor necessary to such a purpose. Relying upon the kind disposition of the reader, he determined to publish as originally written.

Scenes in a Surveyor's Life.

CHAPTER I.

If the life of the frontier settler, in his little log cabin, situated on the line of demarcation between civilization on the one hand and a wilderness of savages and ferocious wild animals on the other, whither he has gone to blaze the way for a more enlightened era, be one of danger, toil, and wild adventure, that of the surveyor, who goes far beyond the settler, even into the very heart of the wilderness, to mark out the land-lines for approaching settlements, is one certainly not less so. Indeed, when we calmly study and compare the pursuits of the two, it cannot but be conceded that the surveyor is surrounded with more dangers, the subject of more toil and hardships, and the recipient of fewer of those articles denominated the luxuries of life.

Let us for a moment more particularly examine and compare the life and pursuits of the surveyor and frontier settler.

When the latter returns from a day's hunt,

which, aside from a small pumpkin and potato-patch, is his principal business, tired and hungry, he is sure, on entering his humble cabin, of finding the steaming coffee and smoking venison all ready for him, prepared by his better-half, whose affectionate smile, and the joyful outbursts of whose prattling progeny, bid him welcome. When his hunger is satisfied he repairs to a comfortable moss-mattress for rest, made smooth by a hand of affectionate regard for his welfare and comfort.

When the former, on the contrary, returns from a hard day's work, lugging the heavy implements necessary for his business through swamps, lagoons, saw-grass, and palmetto hammocks, he enters no cabin, meets no smiling wife, hears not the clamors of his little children, sees no smoking viands, but is forced to prepare his own supper as best he can, by thrusting his venison or bear's meat on a sharp stick and holding it over the flames until half cooked, which he ravenously devours, with a cake of bread of his own make, and then retires to the damp earth for a bed, a pine-knot for a pillow, and the broad sky for a covering.

When the heavens open and the rains descend, the settler enters his log-cabin, unpretending as it is, and he is secure from the beating storm.

Under similar circumstances, the surveyor has no alternative but to lay his troubled head on a *soft lightwood knot*, his body on the wet ground, and *let it rain*, thanking his stars it isn't a hail-storm instead of a rain.

Such are some of the advantages of the frontier settler over the public land surveyor, briefly stated. I will not tax the time or patience of the reader in adducing others, but proceed at once to the object in view, which is simply to give an unvarnished historical account of a tramp of the writer and others in a survey of Government land in South Florida, and some of the many adventures connected with it.

The kind reader, who patiently follows me through, will find recorded many hardships, and dangerous, exciting, as well as amusing scenes, which transpired while we were engaged in that work, and which, I trust, may prove of interest to while away an hour of leisure.

* * * * * * *

Captain —— having procured the services of several persons, whom I shall denominate as Ralf, Sile, Tap, Shepley, Major ——, John Smith, Joe Rogers, and your humble servant, to assist him in executing his contract, we began at once making preparations for departure to our field of operation. As the journey to Jacksonville was coupled with nothing of interest, we pass over it, and commence at that place our history.

It was arranged that Tap, with the other boys, should proceed with the team, consisting of a yoke of oxen and a pair of marsh ponies, by land to Enterprise, while Sile and myself should go up the St. Johns River per steamer for the purpose of taking up a yawl boat to be used in shipping our

plunder down Indian River to the nearest point to our work, and all meet at Enterprise, and there wait the arrival of Capt. ——, who was to follow in the next steamer.

In accordance with this arrangement, both parties left Jacksonville on Saturday, September 2, 185—. On Saturday evening, the Darlington (the steamer on which Sile and myself took passage) reached Palatka, a flourishing little village some seventy-five miles up the river from Jacksonville, where she remained until Monday morning, in order to make connection with the Sunday's steamers for Savannah and Charleston. Early Monday morning we loosed from Palatka, and sailed for Enterprise, which is situated on Lake Monroe, some hundred and twenty-five miles above Palatka.

Of the St. Johns River it is only necessary to say that it is universally admitted to be, by those who have enjoyed the pleasure of a steamboat-ride upon its placid bosom, one of the most magnificent streams in all the country. Properly speaking, we think the St. Johns could hardly be called a river at all, but an immense chain of lakes, stretching itself through the territory. At its entrance into the Atlantic it is, perhaps, not more than half a mile in width, while at Jacksonville (twenty-five miles above) it spreads out to the width of more than a mile. From Jacksonville to Palatka, it varies from three to seven; but as you ascend from the latter place it gradu-

ally contracts until, in some places before reaching Lake Monroe, one might almost step from either guard of the boat on shore.

Immense numbers of alligators inhabit the river, and a prolific source of amusement is offered to the passengers on board the boat in shooting them from the deck as she passes swiftly along.

The scenery on this river is not very magnificent or grand, there being no towering mountains or lofty hills to draw out the poetic imagination or excite a feeling of admiration; yet the variety of scenery renders steamboat-travelling on the St. Johns any thing but irksome. Here you pass through a wide lagoon literally covered with myriads of wild ducks and geese, whose tremendous roar, as they rise like a thunder-storm from the surface of the water, may be heard even above the din of machinery; there you glide by some small island in the river, clothed in flowers of the most beautiful hue, around whose fragrant petals a thousand humming-birds hover; here you sail along almost within arms-length of a magnificent orange-grove, loaded down with its golden fruit, presenting a delightful contrast with the luxuriant green of the surrounding forest; there, again, you suddenly shoot out from the narrow confines of the river into an immense lake, which at once brings to remembrance all those strange emotions you experienced when, for the first time, you launched out upon the bosom of the great deep.

One of those beautiful sheets of water is Lake

George, situated about thirty miles above Palatka. It is eighteen miles broad, and twenty in length. The river enters it at the southern extremity and passes out at the northern. On an island of considerable extent, near where the river passes out, is the residence of the late Dr. Calhoun, son of the South Carolina statesman.

Another of those lakes is Monroe, but not so large as the one just described, being only eight miles in length, and five in width. The river passes through it from east to west.

On the northern shore of this lake is Enterprise, our place of destination on the steamer, which we reached safely on Monday night.

It being dark when we arrived, we chose to remain on board the boat, as it did not leave on its downward trip until morning.

Enterprise is not, as erroneously supposed by many, a city, or even a village, but simply a hotel, built by the enterprising commander of the steamer Darlington, Capt. Brock, for the accommodation of those of a more northern latitude, suffering under pulmonary and other diseases, who may wish to spend their winters in a more genial clime. And certainly a more beautiful place—a place better adapted to the physical wants, and a place affording a greater variety of amusements to while away the time—could nowhere be found in the sunny South.

Situated as it is on the northern shore of the lake, the susceptible frame of the invalid is pro-

tected from the chilling northern blasts by the heavy pine forests which lie in that direction, while the balmy, bracing southern breezes sweep the bosom of the tranquil lake to fan his feverish brow. The woods in the vicinity afford an abundance of game; and those who love the sport of hunting, and possess the strength to enable them to withstand the fatigue, need never complain at Enterprise.

On the morning after our arrival, Sile and I brought ashore our camping equipage, consisting of pots, kettles, fry pans, blankets, knapsacks, &c. &c., and struck camp near Enterprise, in the edge of a wood, to await the coming of the boys with the team, and whom we expected that day, and also for the Captain, on the next boat. The team arrived in due time, and we waited patiently a week for the boat, but, to our great disappointment, the Captain did not come. He had been detained with his business longer than he expected, and we, of course, could do nothing but wait another week, which, in our excessive anxiety to be in the woods, was a long one. It rolled around, however, in due course of time, and the Captain came.

Next morning we began packing up for a start, but before we got through I was seized with a Georgia 'double wabble,' in the shape of an ague, which terminated in a severe spell of bilious fever. This misfortune detained us ten days longer. As soon as I was able to be hauled in an ox-wagon, I

was tumbled in with the other rubbish, and we started.

From this point our route lay south, about one hundred and seventy-five miles, down Indian River, which stream, or rather inlet, runs parallel with the Atlantic coast. The St. Johns and Indian rivers approaching within eight or ten miles of each other, some twenty-five miles above Enterprise, the Captain determined to send four men with the yawl up St. Johns to the nearest point on Indian River, and there meet them with the team and haul the boat and load across to the latter stream. The boat was despatched accordingly, and the men directed to proceed to Lake Harney, and there await our arrival. Now, it happened that neither of the men knew the river between Enterprise and Lake Harney, and it was difficult to navigate on account of islands and a great number of channels running here and there among them. There is also a Lake Jessup between the two places, of which fact the men were not aware, and as a very natural consequence mistook it for Lake Harney, and struck camp to wait our coming. In the mean time the Captain, with the rest of the company, pushed forward to Lake Harney and encamped, every moment expecting the boat's crew to heave in sight. It did not come.

Having waited, and whooped, and fired off guns at various points up and down the lake and river for three long days, the Captain set out to hunt in good earnest the missing men, and after two

more days of laborious search, found them snugly ensconsed on Lake Jessup, enjoying themselves in fishing, shooting alligators, and occasionally taking a pull at the bunghole of the keg of *snake medicine*.

About this time we learned, contrary to our first information, that it was not only impracticable, but utterly impossible to transfer our boat and chattels from one river to the other, as designed. There was no road, besides several creeks and many impassable swamps intervened. We had no alternative but to retrace our steps to Enterprise and take some other course, after a clear loss of eight days, and no inconsiderable amount of provisions.

At Enterprise we fortunately succeeded in procuring wagons to haul our boat and goods across to Smyrna, and sent our own team immediately on to Fort Capron, laden with as much of the plunder as it could conveniently carry, in charge of the Major, Ralf, Rogers, and Smith, at which place we hoped to meet them in nine or ten days.

The Captain, Tap, Sile, Shep, and myself fell to loading the teams we had hired, with the residue of our effects, which was soon accomplished; and about three o'clock in the afternoon we took up our line of march for Smyrna. From Enterprise to Smyrna the distance is thirty miles, through an open pine country, interspersed here

and there with large, clear water lakes, and dense scrubs, with an occasional swamp. The course is a little north of east.

Being heavily laden, we made slow progress, but reached Deep Creek about sunset, where we encamped for the night.

On former surveys the Captain had been in the habit of taking flour to make bread of, or soldier's biscuit, but experience had taught him that it was difficult of preservation, exposed, as it must necessarily be, to all the inclemencies of the weather; so this time he concluded to take corn in stead, and a steel mill to grind it in. It is possible he had also another motive in view, viz: if the men had their corn to grind, they would probably be less apt to waste.

The night we camped on Deep Creek, as soon as the cattle were properly attended to all hands set in to bear an equal part in preparing supper, our regular cook having gone with our wagon. On rummaging around in the wagon for the cooking utensils, we found, to our dismay, that in the hurry of the morning, in getting our team off for Fort Capron, all the pots were inadvertently put into it, and were gone, save only a small frying pan and a tea-kettle. I went to bring out the mill to grind corn for bread, but the handles were missing; they had dropped somewhere on the road, and, of course, the mill was of no use without the handles to turn it. However, this was no

very serious difficulty, as we had a good supply of rice. A fry pan of rice was soon boiled, and a kettle of coffee drawn. We then emptied the rice on palmetto leaves, and used the pan again for frying bacon. Supper now being ready, we seated ourselves on the grass around it, excepting Shepley, who went to fetch some tin-cups from the wagon, out of which to sup the coffee. After a long search, Shep reported no cups to be found; then Tap suddenly remembered he had put them all into our wagon, and they were gone with the pots. Here was a new, and decidedly the most serious difficulty yet. To do without the coffee was out of the question, for it is just as necessary an article to a man camping out as a pipe is to a grandmother; to drink it hot from the spout of the kettle was impossible, and, as we had eaten nothing since morning, to wait until it cooled was more than our hungry stomachs could submit to. Fortunately, I bethought me of a few large sweet potatoes we had purchased at Enterprise, and I directly converted one of them into a cup, by scooping out the pith, that held near a pint. All hands following suit, we were soon supplied with cups which answered every purpose of silver goblets, and lasted to Fort Capron.

After a comfortable night's rest on the luxuriant grass, we arose early in the morning and proceeded on our journey. It being only eighteen miles to Smyrna, we reached that place early

in the afternoon, without any other serious difficulty.

* * * * * * *

As this is merely the introductory, I hope to make the next, and succeeding chapters, more interesting.—AUTHOR.

CHAPTER II.

THE first thing done on arriving at Smyrna was to launch our little craft, and see that she was *tight* and *taut* for the long voyage before us. The cargo was soon stowed snugly away on board, as she would only carry, besides ourselves, one barrel of pork, four sacks of corn, and other matters of plunder, such as knapsacks, blankets, compasses, &c.

Our little craft all ready to set sail, and the Captain concluding to remain here till morning, let us have a word about Smyrna and its situation.

Like Enterprise, the citizens of this place are composed of the members of one family, and the town of one house—the residence of Mr. Sheldon. The situation is a beautiful one, on a high bluff on Musquetoe River, in the midst of a large orange-grove of spontaneous growth, whose every twig bows low under its heavy load of the ripe

golden fruit. Musqueto river is simply an inlet or arm from the ocean, running parallel with the coast; the ridge of land dividing them in many places is not more than a stone's throw in width, and about forty miles in length.

Some two or three hundred yards from the house of Mr. Sheldon, on the bank of the river, are the remains of what is termed the T—— Castle. If I have been correctly informed by those who ought to know, the history of those remains is about as follows: Many years ago, before this part of Florida was known except to the savages, a man named T—— by some means or other got hold of a cargo of creoles on the island of Cuba, whom he landed at this spot, and endeavored to make slaves of them. He succeeded in inducing them to remain by exaggerated accounts of the blood-thirsty propensities of the Indians, whom he represented as cannibals of the worst character, then roaming like hyenas over every part of the country. By some quibble with the Spanish government, he obtained a large grant of land, which he designed to improve and cultivate with his enslaved creoles. His first work was to erect a house of sufficient strength to defy the storms of Indian warfare. There being nothing left now but the ruins of the house, we cannot of course give the entire plan, but it was a large building, perhaps two hundred feet front and seventy or eighty in width, and three stories high, built of brick and cokena rock.

There still stands three of the twelve massive stone pillars which supported the piazza. The whole was enclosed in a stone wall, about five feet in thickness, and I presume, from the pile of rubbish, not less than twelve or fifteen feet high. All this, however, was not sufficient protection from the revenge of the red man. Not a great while after it was completed, while T—— and his creoles were working in the field, the Indians came and battered down the walls, and burned the buildings. From the field T—— and his men saw the ominous pillars of black smoke rise up from the horizon like a flying cloud, and knew too well what it meant. They fled in small boats, and after some days of severe suffering arrived safely in St. Augustine. Thus ended a shrewd but ineffectual scheme to enslave the too-confiding creoles of Cuba.

At Smyrna we had a miserable camping place, being immediately on the sand beach, with no grass to spread our blankets upon, or fuel to burn; and there sprung up a keen north-easter at sunset, which lasted through the night, making it very unpleasant. At sunrise blankets were rolled up, and every thing placed on board our little craft, preparatory to a voyage down Musqueto and Indian rivers of one hundred and sixty miles, with not a human habitation on the whole route. All hands on board, we found the gunwales of our little boat stood only about four inches above the surface of the water. It was too heavily

loaded, but we had nothing on board but what was absolutely necessary for us to take, and we determined to make the venture and risk the consequences. The anchor hoisted, the sails flung to the breeze, and we glided smoothly and beautifully out of the little harbor into the river. It was a boisterous morning. The wind, still blowing from the northeast, made it exceedingly difficult sailing among the islands in the many narrow and crooked channels, particularly for the first fifteen miles. After this, however, the river gradually widened, the wind became more steady, and we moved along finely.

At noon we reached *Turtle Mound*, where we landed and ate dinner. This very singular mound, we think, deserves a passing notice.

It is composed entirely of oyster-shells, and is about one hundred and twenty-five feet high, and perhaps three or four hundred in diameter at its base. How, when, and for what purpose this immense structure of shell was thrown up here, will probably remain a mystery to the end of time. It is situated on the narrow sand ridge between the river and Atlantic—one side washed by the waters of the river and the other by those of old mother ocean, and appearances would indicate that her surging billows have thundered there for a thousand years. We climbed to the summit of the mound, and had a magnificent view of the ocean.

On the top of the mound, where a little soil

has collected, the growth is wild pepper, which was just ripening when we were there. It was a species resembling the cayenne, but not quite so pungent. We gathered a large quantity of it to serve up with the venison we expected to kill when we arrived at our place of destination.

At two o'clock we left Turtle Mound, and sailed down the river at a rapid rate before a fine breeze. The river along here was generally narrow—not wider, perhaps, than two or three hundred yards. Our fine sailing, however, did not last long, for the wind that promised so much at noon completely died out about four o'clock, and we were forced to take to the oars, and made but slow progress in the heavily laden condition of our boat.

At sundown we approached Musqueto lagoon, a tremendous lake, which spreads itself over an area of near two hundred square miles. There was no dry spot of ground on either side of the river, it being marshy and muddy; so we pulled for a small island discernable some three miles out in the lagoon, and reached it about dark. It was quite a small place, containing not more than half an acre of dry ground, and no wood save only such as is furnished by the mangrove bush. We succeeded, however, in collecting enough for culinary purposes, but not enough for keeping up a fire through the night. Between the want of fire to keep us unchilled, and the bites of musquetos, we spent anything but a comfortable night. Next morning when we rose, and each saw the other's

face, no man felt called upon to ask "why was this stream called *Musqueto River*, and this body of water *Musqueto* Lagoon?" Some one of the boys even suggested that the island upon which we had camped was formed by a collection of a *small* number of that very pestiferous little insect inhabiting those regions, and proposed that we dub it *Musqueto Island*.

With the springing up of the morning breeze we left our little Musqueto island, and I do not now remember that either of the party expressed any regret at feeling the first flaw of the wind that was to waft us away from the inhospitable little lords of the soil, as daylight only brought fresh armies to relieve those who, doubtless, were fatigued by a whole night's incessant work.

Our course lay southward, through the middle of this immense lake; and I am free to confess that I for one felt some forebodings in launching out before so strong a wind, in so small a boat, and she loaded, too, within four inches of the water's edge.

The farther out we went the fiercer blew the wind, until it swelled into a stiff gale; and it soon became apparent that to weather the storm it would require the most skilful management. The Captain ordered a reef taken in the sails, which was no sooner said than done. In the mean time the water became restless, and from a gentle undulating motion of the surface, it gradually grew into tremendous waves, which thundered against

our little craft as if maddened at her presence, and determined on her destruction. Firmly stood the Captain at the helm, while I swung to the sheet-rope to "let go" whenever it should become necessary to save us from a beam-end position, and the boys worked hard with buckets and cups to keep the water bailed out, which, in spite of all our efforts, would burst over the gunwales at almost every wave.

"Take another reef," said the Captain.

It was quickly done, and still she flew like a thing of life through the maddened sea of foaming white. On we plunged, not knowing what moment a more daring white-capped wave might break over our heads and send us all to Davy Jones' locker; but our little craft rode the billows nobly, and when, after three hours perilous sailing, we shot safely into the little lagoon leading to Haul-over canal, I am sure every man's heart beat freer, and every mind felt easier.

The *Haul-over* is a narrow canal cut from Musqueto to Indian rivers, at the narrowest point between the lap of the two bodies of water, and serves as a passage for small boats from one to the other. It is several hundred yards long, and about ten wide, with an average depth, perhaps, of three feet water. On the bars, however, at each end of the canal, there is generally not more than fourteen inches, which frequently occasions much difficulty with loaded boats, as was the case with us. We were forced to get out into the water

and shove the boat through the mud and quicksand. We tarried here to take dinner and also to replenish our exhausted water-jugs from an old well made by those who cut the canal. The water was very bad, being very brackish; and the musquetos bit us so incessantly we could eat dinner in no peace. As soon as it could be despatched, therefore, we launched out upon the broad bosom of Indian river. Where we entered it from the canal it is about six miles wide. Owing to an ugly coral reef, we were obliged to sail directly across to the opposite shore before we could lay our course. The wind springing up, we had quite a rough passage; but, by dint of good seamanship and the industrious use of bail-buckets, we made the run in safety. Passing the reef, we turned immediately south, and our course lay before us without deviation to the right or left. From this point to Fort Capron (one hundred and fifty-five miles) the river is perfectly straight. An air-line from the centre of the river here to the centre at Fort Capron would touch the land nowhere on either side. The width of this body of water varies from six or eight to twenty miles. The water is much more salt than that of the ocean, owing to the fact, I suppose, that it is shallow, and evaporation takes place rapidly. The number of wild-ducks seen floating on the water and flying in the air was truly astonishing. We frequently frightened up flocks of them extending almost from one side of the river

to the other. When one of these large flocks rose in the air, it presented much the appearance and sound of an approaching thunder-cloud. Of course we feasted on their fat and delicious flesh during the entire trip.

The breeze dying out soon after passing the reef, we had again to take to the oars, and, in consequence, made but slow progress. At sunset we ran ashore at Sand Point, and encamped for the night near the beautiful white sand beach, on the edge of a dense hammock. This hammock, commencing at Smyrna, extends down the western side of Musqueto river, and also down the west side of Indian river, some forty miles, extending back some four or five miles from the rivers; it contains many thousand acres of land. The soil is exceedingly fertile, and, I think, peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of long staple cotton and sugar. The finest live-oak in Florida is said to be in this hammock.

We noticed on landing that the beach was literally covered with bear tracks, of all sizes, from old bruin down to little cubby. One old bear and her two cubs, from the freshness of the signs, had evidently just passed along, and were only a short distance down the river. The Captain took a gun and went in pursuit, while the balance of us commenced preparations for an early supper, that we might get a good night's sleep to make up for time lost on Musqueto island. About dark we heard the Captain fire, some distance down

the river, and not knowing what difficulty he might get into in that wild region, Sile and I ran down to assist him, but on arriving found that he had only shot some ducks.

At this camping place an accident happened, or very nearly happened, which was rather startling to all hands, but particularly so to the Captain and myself. After supper, the Captain had his trunk brought on shore to examine some papers which were in it, and when he had finished, instead of having it taken back to the boat, he suffered it to remain on shore. When bed-time came we spread our blankets—the Captain and I sleeping together—and placed the trunk at our heads for protection, as much as possible, from the cold wind, forgetting the fact that there were some eight pounds of powder in the trunk. On waking next morning we were dismayed to find that the leaves, which were thickly scattered around where we lay, had caught fire, and actually burned around us to the trunk! burned all the covering off the side farthest from our heads —burned several holes through it, and scorched some papers inside without igniting the powder, or doing any other damage.

Always a strong believer in the ever-present protecting influence of Omnipotence, this was not a circumstance calculated to lessen my faith. It may be safely inferred, ever afterwards the distance between fire and powder was kept as wide as possible.

We had a fine sailing-breeze on this day until about noon, when there came up a heavy storm of wind and rain, and the river became so rough we were forced to put into a little cove for protection, where we remained about an hour before we could venture out. When the storm passed over the wind ceased entirely; but it continued to rain, and the oars were kept in requisition all the afternoon, which, I still remember, we did not consider a particularly interesting or pleasant exercise in the heavy rain that poured down upon us the whole afternoon without cessation. At night we had to climb an almost perpendicular bank, some thirty feet high, to get a camping place. We had, also, much difficulty in preparing supper in the rain; but about nine o'clock it cleared off prettily, and we slept soundly in our wet garments.

I was much afraid this exposure would bring on a return of fever, but, fortunately, it had no such effect. The only inconvenience I had now to contend with, as the result of my spell of sickness at Enterprise, was a morbid appetite, which seemed to increase daily, and which I could at no time fully gratify, without the greatest suffering for my benevolence.

CHAPTER III.

About noon of the day on which we left our encampment at Sand Point, we put into Turkey Bay, into which Turkey Creek empties, to replenish our water-jugs at a spring near by; and, also, to get a supply of oysters, which, in this bay, are remarkable for their large size and fine flavor. The entrance from the river is not more than one hundred feet in width; the bay itself is about two hundred yards from side to side, and in shape perfectly round. The bank, all around, rises from the water's edge at an angle of some thirty degrees, to the elevation of forty feet. The bay is entirely inclosed in a hammock of considerable extent and fertile soil, in which there is a grove of wild oranges. We noticed a number of otters fishing in the bay, and were no little amused at their cunning and dexterity in catching the fish. The water was in a perfect boil with the fish. No description can convey anything like an adequate idea of their immense number, everywhere visible, not only here, but in every part of Indian River. Just before reaching Turkey Creek we passed the southern point of an island called Merrit's Island, which is some thirty miles in length and five in width. The land on this island is

principally pine, of the first quality, with some hammock, but I had no means of ascertaining how much.

The remainder of our voyage was remarkable for nothing save the number of musquetos, and their blood-thirstiness. The bluffs on the river in many places were steep, high, and studded with large masses of cokena rock. As far as we could judge, from the boat, the country on either side of the river was rather elevated, and of a good quality of pine, with an occasional hammock.

As we sailed along the river we saw very little game, but wherever we landed we saw any quantity of deer, turkey, and bear signs, particularly the latter, which at almost every place seemed to predominate. We also frequently saw the tracks of other animals, such as panthers, wolves, wild-cats, foxes, raccoons, &c. No country can afford a greater amount or variety of amusement to the sportsman than this.

We arrived safely, and in good health, at Fort Capron on the evening of the sixth day from Smyrna. Finding no suitable place near the garrison, we ran down some two hundred yards below and encamped for the night, where we suffered bountifully from the bites of musquetos, and a cutting north-easter, which swept like a hurricane down the river. Here we had much difficulty in finding wood to cook with, as the soldiers had used all within reach; and only after a long

search in the dark, we found a sufficient number of small twigs to half cook our supper. When it was announced as ready for eating we were forced, in order to prevent the musquetos flying down our throats, to take it on board the boat and push half a mile out in the river before we could do so.

On inquiry we found, as expected, that our team had not yet arrived, and of course we had nothing to do but wait until it did come. We found Fort Capron on a fine situation, and, on the whole, quite a pretty place. A company of United States troops were stationed here at the time of our visit, for the purpose of keeping in check the Seminole Indians, who occupy all, or nearly all, that portion of Florida south of this point. The barracks, commissary, hospital, officers' buildings, and the dwellings of one or two citizens in the immediate vicinity, altogether formed quite a little village. The parade-ground is perfectly level, and beautifully interspersed here and there with the palmetto tree. The garden of Major Russel at this time presented a superb appearance. In addition to the different varieties of vegetables ordinarily grown in gardens, there were numerous varieties of fruit, such as oranges, lemons, limes, pine-apples, plantains, bananas, guavas, and others. The Major had also a number of cocoanut trees, but they were not yet old enough to bear. Of the various fruits (we were permitted to pluck and eat at pleasure) none suffered more than the banana.

Through the kindness of Majors Russel and Haskins, we were furnished a house the day after our arrival, divided into bed-rooms by partitions of musqueto-netting, and spent a whole week in waiting for the team, quite comfortably quartered. During this week we fared sumptuously on fish, of which there were so many in the river, it required only one throw of a small cast-net to procure enough to last four of us more than a day. Shooting the salt-water trout, which swam up near the banks to catch the smaller fish, and drying them in the sun to take with us to the woods, was a source of amusement and pastime. Some of them weighed twelve or fifteen pounds.

At the end of a week our team and men arrived by the land-routes after a tedious and perplexing trip of twelve days. We had thought until now that we had passed through the grand rendezvous of all the musquetos in East or South Florida; but judging from the *virulent pustulic* appearance of every exposed part of the men who had made the land-trip, we had only seen the outposts of the enemy. While we of the boat had reason to complain more of the musquetos at our present location than at any other point on the river, they of the team expressed themselves as being perfectly delighted at having arrived where there were no musquetos. We gave it up.

The Major and his little company suffered much hardship on their trip. They neglected, in the hurry of their departure from Enterprise, to take

a sufficient quantity of provision to last them, and suffered no little in consequence. The sixth day from Enterprise they ate their last, supposing they could not be more than a few hours journey from Fort Capron, and the remaining six lived entirely on fresh venison, without salt, with an occasional palmetto bud, as they could spare the time to cut it. Fortunately for them they found game plentiful, and tame enough to be shot down at pleasure. For the want of salt and bread they only ate enough to keep up strength, and when they arrived at Fort Capron they were ravenously hungry. The first thing the Major did was to sit himself down with a large tin-pan of baked beans and pickled pork on one side of him, and a ten-gallon keg of whiskey on the other, where he remained, dividing his time and attention between the two, until I verily thought the man would kill himself.

The Major described the whole route as being a prairie country, with some pine land, and an occasional cabbage hammock; some of the prairies so large that the eye could not reach the opposite side, and all covered with the most luxuriant grass, waist high, making it the finest cattle-range in the world. My own opinion is, that ere a great while these prairie lands will be made valuable for planting purposes. They are of a dark, rich colored soil, with a foundation of marl from eighteen to twenty-six inches below the surface; and, being somewhat elevated, are not sub-

ject to overflow, except during an extraordinarily rainy season, and even this danger might be easily obviated by a little ditching.

Our survey began some thirty miles west of Fort Capron, extending twelve miles still farther westward, and twenty miles south, to Lake Okechobee, including the ground upon which the celebrated battle between Gen. Taylor and the Seminole chiefs Apeiaka, Ololke-thlock, and Coa-coachee was fought, December 26, 1838. Our work lay immediately contiguous to the boundary line of the territory now claimed by Billy Bowlegs and his party, and, in truth, was not especially enviable on this account, as the treacherous character of these Indians render them anything but safe and pleasant neighbors. I shall probably have occasion to speak more particularly of the Seminoles hereafter. Giving our tired team one day's rest, we began to make preparations for taking leave of the last vestige of civilization.

Loading the wagon with as many articles as the team could well pull, we struck out on an old trail leading almost due west. For several miles we passed over a succession of barren sand-hills, with little or no growth upon them save here and there a rough, scrubby pine, so low in stature that one might almost hitch his horse's bridle to the topmost bough without very materially stretching himself. Here and there, also, were parched and shriveled bunches of wire-grass, which looked as though it might not have grown

an inch during the last quarter of a century. In an hour or two, however, we passed this sterile barren, and entered an elevated, but level, country, of rich soil, fine timber, and the most luxuriant growth of green grass I had ever seen. We passed a number of prairies: some of them containing many thousand acres, all covered with a peculiar grass some three feet high, which appeared to me unsurpassed for stock-raising purposes. Occasionally, too, we traveled close to the margin of a large lake, four or five miles in circuit, the water clear as crystal, and containing every variety of fresh water fish. At sunset we came to a small brook of pure water, clear and cool, where we encamped for the night. It was an excellent camping place, dry and grassy. We collected a large quantity of *fat lightwood* in anticipation of a bloody attack from our old enemies, the musquetos. When we have plenty of fuel we can ward off their attacks, by kindling a number of fires, in a circle, and getting into the centre; for it is a singular fact, as well as a most merciful provision of providence, that a musqueto will not pass between two fires when burning near each other.

But on this night, to our inexpressible joy, notwithstanding all our trouble in collecting lightwood to keep them off, not a musqueto buzzed about our ears; nor did they for sometime afterwards. They seemed all to have concentrated on, or about Indian River.

At this camping place, the Major and myself

concluded to take a fire hunt, as all hands had expressed a desire for fresh venison. That the reader may have a distinct idea of this kind of pursuit, I will briefly describe the modus operandi. Two persons are indispensable to the operation. One walks ahead with a fire pan on his shoulder, filled with blazing pine-knots, casting a glaring light all around upon the neighboring forest, while the other follows immediately behind the first, with a gun in his hand, and a small wallet of split pine knots on his shoulder, for replenishing the fire from time to time, as occasion may require.

They walk steadily and silently forward, the pan-man turning his light from side to side and keeping his eyes steadily fixed all the while on the edge of his shadow some distance ahead. The deer, reposing quietly in the grass, is awakenedb y the hunters, and instead of fleeing to the thickets, he remains stupidly gazing on the portentous light, and the glaring of his eyes betrays his place of rest to the hunter. As soon as the man with the fire shines the eye, he makes a sign to his comrade behind him, who silently cocks the gun hands it to him, and then squats in the grass, to wait the result. The man with the fire and gun, now steps slowly and stealthily forward, until within fair gun-shot, and fires. Fire hunters also usually have a dog, trained for the purpose, which is led by a line, and when a deer is wounded, but runs off, the dog takes the trail and leads the hunter directly to his place of retreat, when, if he is

not already dead, his eyes are again shined, and a second shot procured. But to return to our hunt.

Having split a sufficient quantity of pine, the Major shouldered the long-handled fire pan, and myself the gun and wallet of pine, not forgetting Bull, (the dog,) and started. Keeping along the same old trail we had followed from Fort Capron, we did not walk more than a mile, before the Major made sign that he had shined a pair of eyes. I immediately handed him the gun, and he advanced a few yards and fired. At the crack of the gun, the deer gave several heavy plunges among some brush and palmetto bushes, and fled. We put the dog on track, and in ten minutes got another shot, which resulted precisely as the first. We now thought our game must be badly crippled, and after some consultation loosed the line from Bull's neck and let him go, supposing he would catch it in a few moments. Away he went as hard as he could scamper, yelping at every jump. We listened at every moment to hear the deer bleat, but further sounded Bull's voice until it could no longer be heard, and we gave up the deer as lost. Presently, however, we heard the yelping again, and as it approached, the more and more distinct it became. The deer was coming down the creek swamp, with Bull in close pursuit, as we could now distinctly hear the plunges of each in the brush and water. Just as they came opposite to us in the swamp, the deer bleated, and we knew Bull had him. We started to them as fast as

possible, guided by the deer's incessant bellowing, the growls and suppressed barks of Bull, and their tremendous plunges in the water. When within about fifty yards of the scene, a vine caught the pan and emptied every spark of fire into the water, then over knee deep; but without stopping to cry over *spilt fire*, we pushed on as fast as we could make a way through the vines, bushes, and bamboo briars, in the pitchy darkness, and when we arrived at the edge of the creek channel, Bull was standing on a tussock looking wistfully into the water, giving occasionally a whine and bark, but no deer was to be seen.

"He's in the creek," said the Major, "and if you'll hold on to the pan I'll go in and fish him out."

I took the pan and he walked in; the water coming up to his armpits. He felt around for some time before finding it, and when he had done so at last, cried out, "Here he is—here's the rascal," and then commenced a scuffle, the like of which I have never seen before. The water splashed all over me, so much so indeed, I was forced to retire somewhat to keep the gun dry.

"Hand me the hatchet," said the Major, "quick, hand me the ——," then under he and the deer both went.

"O-o-s-h," said he, blowing the water out of his mouth and nose as he came up again.

"Hand me your kni——," but the balance of the sentence was carried under with him.

"Jump astride of him," I shouted as he came up, "and drown him. I can't come to you, loaded as I am. Mount his back and sink him."

"Straddle thunder," bawled the Major, "sink the nation. Come and help me, he's tearing me to pieces."

Fearing the Major might get seriously hurt, I laid the gun and other plunder on some roots which projected out of the water, and ran in to his assistance, and with our combined efforts soon drowned the deer. On dragging him out and striking a light, I found the Major almost bereft of his clothes, and not only were his clothes torn, but his skin also, in upwards of forty places. We strung our buck on a pole, and returned to camp, when the Capt. and boys laughed no little at my recital of our adventure in the creek swamp.

CHAPTER IV.

HAVING lost much time, and being anxious to get to work as soon as possible, the gray streaks, indicating the approach of daylight, had scarcely began to shoot up from the east, on the morning following the fire hunt, before we were busy hitching up our team for a start. In order to make better headway with our heavily loaded wagon, we tackled the two ponies to the end of the wagon tongue to help the oxen along.

Now it happened that the yoke of oxen we had were the most vicious and spiteful animals I ever saw. They could be approached with safety neither at one end or the other; for behind they lost no opportunity to *kick*, and in front none to *hook*. In fact, to show more clearly their viperous dispositions, when they got tired and began to lag, some of us frequently walked a pace or two in front of them, turning now and then, and making a motion at them as if to strike, which would excite their anger and cause them to travel with unabated energy for hours, with the hope of catching us. It was necessary too, in this operation, to have a special care for number one; for a stumble and fall, immediately in front of those brutes, would certainly have been attended with disagreeable, if not fatal consequences. Owing to their illness, they sometimes gave us a deal of trouble, and on the morning in question, were especially fractious. They seemed determined not to be worked. The whole company united in using every means to get them to their proper places, for a long time with but little effect. At last, however, we got them straight—one on either side of the tongue, and Smith went slyly around to lift the tongue, that the end of it might be put in the yoke ring, which would put an end to our present troubles, and make all things safe.

"Take care there, Smith," said I, "that ox will kick you."

"No danger," he answered, "if he kicks me I'll

take my kni——," but before the sentence or threat was completed, the ox's foot came in contact with Smith's knee, with no very measured force, if one might judge from the sound produced.

"Oh-oh-oh-oh-o-h-a," groaned Smith, "tumbling down and holding his knee with both hands."

"Oh Lordy, my leg is b-r-o-k-e."

As the Captain and Sile ran around to see how badly the old fellow was hurt, which was soon ascertained to be not half so bad as one might be led to believe by his groans and writhings in the grass, the oxen commenced a series of jumps and plunges about in various directions, and continued to do so until they got themselves in a position that one of their tails pointed to the north pole, and the other to the south, and got the ponies so much entangled in their geering that one of them rolled over on his side, and had to be cut loose before he could rise.

After a time, however, we got them quieted and hitched to the wagon, and made them travel to make up lost time. The whole scene was full of ludicrousness, and so forcibly reminded me of the Irish sailor's first experience on a farm, (which I believe has never been in print,) I hope the reader will pardon me for relating it here. It was as follows:

Returning from a sea-faring life, the Irishman hired himself to a farmer, choosing in preference to all other employments that of tilling the soil. The farmer immediately put him to plowing a

spike-team, consisting of a yoke of oxen, and a little brown mare named Bess. For a time he got along admirably, and was highly delighted with the farmer's life. Unfortunately, however, one afternoon, while moving quietly along in the discharge of his duty, and reflecting upon the great difference between Ameriky and Swate Ireland, he stirred up a yellow jacket nest, the inmates of which began at once a wholesale attack upon his team. The oxen plunged and twisted here and there, until they twisted the yoke around and got it under their necks, and the lead ox was where the off one should be, and the off one in the place of the leader. Little Bess also became entangled, in the mean time, and fell down. At this point, Pat, who had stood apart and watched the whole proceedings with astonishment, could stand it no longer, but dropped his long whip and ran for the house with all his might, and as soon as he had approached sufficiently near to make himself heard, shouted "Masther, Masther, come here quickly, for the very blazes is to pay down here in the field."

"What's the matter?" asked the master, frightened almost as much as his plowman.

"Why, be Jabers," answered Pat, almost out of breath, "the larboard ox has got over to the starboard side, and the starboard ox to the larboard side, little Bess lays on her beam ends, and they are all dhrifting to the divil together."

The reader will not fail to observe the points of similarity in the Irishman's case and our own.

Our route this day lay through a country of exceeding fertility, interspersed, here and there, with immense prairies, reaching, some of them, as far as the eye could see. The grass on those prairies was then as high as a man's shoulders, of the most luxuriant green, and when wafted hither and thither by the south breezes, presented much the appearance of the undulating motion of the great ocean.

Occasionally too, we passed large lakes, like seas in miniature, whose waters were as clear as crystal, and literally, almost, alive with every species of fresh water fish, turtles, and alligators.

The deer gamboled about us on every side, and having never been hunted, except occasionally by straggling parties of Indians, they were so tame that we had no trouble in shooting them down whenever we saw proper.

To one who is desirous of quitting the world without necessity of "taking up a tree," this part of Florida offers numerous inducements. I consider it the easiest country in the world not only to live in, but to *get rich in*. One hundred head of cattle, twenty-five brood mares, and fifty or a hundred head of hogs, would be all the start a man would want, and might easily be made the basis of a handsome fortune in a short time. In a few years they would increase four fold, and that without the necessary outlay of a single dollar.

In addition to these, nearly every variety of the tropical fruits might be successfully cultivated, and on account of the near proximity to the coast, there could be little difficulty in shipping whatever might be produced to a market in some of the Atlantic cities.

With a small capital, say five hundred dollars, a fishery could be established on Indian river that would pay better than any now in the south. The depth and shores of the river are peculiarly fitted for this business, and there can be no reasonable doubt that an immense business in this line will one day be carried on at various points along this river.

The day will certainly come, and I can see no cause why it should be very distant, when, this will be one of the most populous, productive, and wealthy portions of the State. Hitherto the great drawback and blighting curse upon the interest of Florida, has been the handful of ungovernable, untamable Seminole Indians, with whom we have to a late period been engaged in an expensive war. For the long period of more than seventeen years they have been permitted to roam with impunity like hyenas over the fairest portions of the country, committing the grossest acts of bloodshed upon our citizens—shooting them down like brutes just whenever the devil happened to dictate to them the propriety of committing such acts, and destroying vast amounts of property belonging to the frontier settles. By these hostile demonstra-

tions, together with their well known insatiable propensities for thieving, they have deterred thousands of enterprising and useful citizens from emigrating to our State. Arrangements are now on foot, however, which it is confidently believed will speedily rid the State of the remnant of this tribe of Indians, which for so long a time has kept us at bay, and destroyed so many of our citizens.

At noon the Captain took Sile with him, and struck off in a Northeasterly direction for the purpose of finding some old land lines, which, from what information could be gathered from maps furnished at the Surveyor General's office, he thought must be in that direction not very far off. By these lines he designed to trace out the corner post from which his survey commenced. The rest of us, the Captain ordered to continue our route along the same old trail we had followed from Fort Capron, and he and Sile would shape their course so as to meet us at dark some six or eight miles ahead. We accordingly marched forward, but did not travel more than three or four miles before we came to a creek which was impassable except by swimming. Here was a most serious difficulty which had never entered our calculations.

The creek was some twenty-five yards in width, and the banks on either side being almost perpendicularly steep, it was swimming from one side to the other. Cross it we must; there was no

use in waiting for the Captain's advice—but how?

Fortunately, after many sore scratchings of the head, I bethought me of a large good's box in the wagon, in which some corn was stored. I immediately had the corn removed from it and the box brought out. We then proceeded to calk it as well as we could with such materials as were at hand, for the purpose of making use of it as a boat. By bringing into requisition the Surveyor's chains, we mustered line enough to reach twice across the stream. One of these lines we fastened to one end of this novel boat, and the other to the other end. Having loaded it with as much as it would conveniently carry, Tap swam to the opposite shore with the end of the line, and drew the boat and cargo safely across. When he had unloaded it we drew it back again by the line fastened at the other end. Thus we slowly, but safely passed over all our plunder to the opposite side of the creek. We then swam the oxen and ponies across with but little trouble.

The next part of the business was to get the wagon across. This was accomplished in the following manner: Drawing it up close to the water's edge, we fastened our boat lines to the end of the tongue and carried an end to the opposite shore, where we hitched the ponies to it to drag it across. We imagined that if we could ease it down the steep bank into the water, the ponies might be able to pull it over before it had time to sink.

For this purpose a man was placed at each wheel, and the others wherever they could find a position best suited to the object in view. All ready, the word was given to move slowly forward. On the brink of the embankment the wagon poised for a moment, like the eagle about to dart upon his prey, then plunged forward with a tremendous force, knocking Shepley head foremost to the bottom. He had foolishly, and unobserved, taken a position in front of the wagon, as he said, the more effectually to hold back. As soon as we had fished him out from between the wheels, which we did with much difficulty, Tap put hickory to the ponies on the other side of the creek, and before it had time to entirely sink we had the wagon so near the bank, that we were able to hitch the oxen to the end of the tongue and drag it out.

Although the wagon, team and loading were all safely across, by far the most serious difficulty yet remained to be overcome. Joe Rogers, with his big abdominal protuberance, was yet on the wrong side of the creek, and he had never learned the art of swimming. He couldn't begin to get into the good's box, and if he could, it would certainly have toppled over and spilled him out. Various plans were proposed, discussed, and then dismissed as impracticable. It was finally accomplished in the following manner: Having one of the ponies brought back to where he could just stand with his back above water, I tied one of the lines to

Joe's left arm, and the other to the pony's bridle; both extending to the opposite shore. Joe then took his position on one side of the pony, and I on the other. I directed him to hold to my left wrist, and with the hand of the same I took firm hold of the pony's mane; and in this manner Joe, the pony, and myself, were quickly landed on the other side of the creek, with no other damage than a sharp pain in my wrist, caused by an unwonted pressure of that part by Joe's powerful grip.

It being sundown when we got everything over, we built a large fire to dry our clothes, and pitched the tent for the night. About dark, the Captain and Sile came down to the creek, on the opposite side from where we were encamped, as we expected, and were no less astonished than gratified to find that we had got everything safely over.

The day following our encampment here, after a laborious search for the old land lines, run some thirty years previous, we found them, and late in the afternoon traced out our point of commencement. It was a small lightwood post, stuck up about a half mile in a dense swamp of tie-tie, wild rose, and bamboo briar.

Bright and early in the morning, after a refreshing night's sleep, the boys were all astir, making preparation for a commencement of work. The Captain ordered two days rations, the night previous, for each man to pack, as it was uncertain how far it was to dry land in the direction in

which he designed to run from the point of starting, and he did not wish to leave the swamp until the line was put through. Each man was furnished with such of the surveying implements as was adapted to the capacity in which he was desired to operate. Shep and Sile, for instance, were furnished with axes; Ralf and myself, as chainsmen, with chain and pins; Joe and Tap, as packmen, with the ponies and pack saddles; Smith as cook, with all the camping equipage, oxen and wagon; and the Major, who was a sort of privileged character, nothing being required of him but to kill game, was put in charge of the guns and ammunition.

On arriving at the corner-post, the Captain proceeded to administer the oath required by law. "Take off your hats," said he, "and all lay your hands on this post, while I repeat the obligation you, as my assistants, have to subscribe to."

All hands did as requested, looking as solemn as if in the presence of the dead. Imagine, reader, if you can, the ludicrous appearance presented by the several persons grouped around that post, standing waist deep in mud and water in a dense swamp, far from civilization, in South Florida. The dress of each was a hickory hunting shirt, fastened about the waist by means of a leathern belt, which supported on one side a large butcher knife and sheath, and on the other a tin cup, to be used in the various capacities of tea cup, tea kettle, coffee pot and water bucket. Each

man, also, had a blanket strapped to his back, in which was rolled two day's rations of bread, meat and coffee.

"You, and each of you," said the Captain, as nearly as I can now recollect, "do solemnly swear, as axemen, chainmen, &c., that you will perform your several duties under my direction, to the best of your knowledge and ability, and remain with me until the survey is finished, unless in some way providentially hindered, so help you God." "I do!" was the prompt response of every man.

CHAPTER V.

THE compass was set, the chain unrolled, and the axemen commenced clearing out a track due south along which to measure the line. When a sort of opening was made through the thick undergrowth for some distance by the axeman, the Captain pulled up his jacob staff and moved forward for a new sight. My position being at the front end of the chain, I moved ahead, also carrying the ten little iron pins used by surveyors in measuring land, and when the chain was stretched full length, Ralf shouted "*stick.*" I immediately stuck down one of the pins at the end of the chain, and answered "*stuck.*"

This interesting operation was repeated every thirty-three feet; that being the length of the chain used by surveyors.

On account of the thick undergrowth of the swamp, closely interwoven with bambo and almost every other species of thorned vine and bush, through which it was necessary to open a road sufficiently wide and clear to enable us to make a correct line and measurement, we progressed but slowly, as at noon we had made but one mile and a quarter. The water being three feet deep, we were under the necessity of standing to dine, and using roots and cypress knees which projected out of the water as tables.

In the afternoon the growth of the swamp appeared to become more dense, and the water deeper, so that it was exceedingly difficult and fatiguing to make any headway at all.

As the sun sunk lower and lower toward the western horizon, and there appeared no signs of dry land, we began to prepare our minds for a glorious night of it in the swamp, with no place dry enough to lie upon, or to build a fire upon, to keep off the musquetos, which had begun already to sing their ominous notes about our anxious ears. Good fortune, however, destined for us a better fate. The Captain discovered, some distance off, in the direction we were going, what he conceived to be an opening, which we thought might be high woods. We stuck down a stake to mark the spot, rolled up the chain, and pushed for this open

space, in hopes of finding high ground upon which to encamp for the night. We were not disappointed, for the opening proved to be a small island, containing about an acre of dry ground, and affording an abundance of wood. We slept soundly after our laborious day's work in the swamp, under an old Indian shed, covered with pine bark, several of which were standing on different parts of the island.

At an early hour in the morning we plunged again into the swamp, anxious to see the opposite side. All hands seemed cheerful and lively until toward evening, as the prospect for a night in the swamp seemed now almost inevitable, when there was evidently a lengthening of faces all around. No one felt disposed to communicate his thoughts to his neighbor, so that there was no talking done. Nothing broke the solemn stillness around us, save the noise of the axes, an occasional order from the Captain to the axemen directing them "to the right" or "to the left," as the case might require, the splashing of the water as we dragged our tired legs through it, and the eternal *stick*, *stuck*, *stick*, *stuck*, of the chainmen.

There can be little doubt that very many unpleasant thoughts were associated that afternoon with surveying generally; but no dissatisfaction was openly expressed by any, if we may except a few horrid groans which occasionally escaped from Joe, as he would hitch his foot under a root and precipitate himself, head and ears, under the

mud and water. About four o'clock in the afternoon the Captain climbed a tree to look out ahead, and proclaimed the glorious news of "high ground and open woods ahead, and not more than three hundred yards off." By this proclamation a wonderful change came over the spirit of our dreams. Where only a few minutes previous all was solemnity and gloom, now all was merriment and high glee. The redoubled efforts of the axemen soon brought us to high open pine woods, after having spent two days in making a line of four miles length in the swamp. As soon as we emerged from the mud and water, we marked the spot, and set out for the camp. We found it about seven miles around the swamp, and reached there about dark, tired and hungry enough. After enjoying a hearty supper, blankets were spread, and a night of profound obliviousness soon passed away.

On the following morning we packed every thing into the wagon, and moved around to the south side of the swamp, which operation, owing to the very difficult passage around, consumed the entire day. We reached the rolling pine woods at the point where we desired to locate a camp, at about dark, and came to a halt. Within a hundred yards or so of the spot where our tent was pitched, there was a large clear water lake, from which we desired to get our supply of water. When we had unharnessed the team, I mounted old Bet, (one of the ponies,) and Ralf the other,

to ride them down to water. Arriving to within a few feet of the water's edge, Bet called a halt and refused to approach another inch, for what reason I could not see. I used every means short of actual force to induce her to go near enough to drink, for I knew she was dry, but to no purpose. In the darkness I could see nothing, nor could I conceive of anything that could justify such obstinacy. I borrowed Rabe's whip, and applied it to her for sometime, but to no effect. Becoming furious at last at what I conceived the most unwarrantable contrariness, I alighted in the palmetto and began to apply the lash in such a manner as to make her snort at every blow. After a long resistance, in which she jumped and kicked at no small rate, the poor old brute made a desperate effort, stepped forward, and in another instant disappeared entirely beneath the flood before us, except about six inches of her nose, which, by a strong effort at the bridle, I succeeded in keeping above the surface. On a closer examination, we found the bank of the lake was perpendicular to the depth of about six or seven feet, and there extended from the shore some distance out into the lake a mass of mud, moss, and water, too thick to allow Bet to swim, and too thin and soft to prevent her going down. We had a heavy job to get her out. By means of a spade, however, with which we dug away the bank, and a number of pry poles, we succeeded in doing so after four hours labor.

For some time after this adventure we went

rapidly forward with our work without meeting with anything of particular interest. We generally located our camp in the centre of a township as near as we could guess, and worked around it with one, two, or three days rations packed on our backs, and sleeping at night wherever dark caught us, and we could find a dry spot of ground; making the camp in the middle of the township headquarters, to which we returned when our provisions were consumed. The packmen were usually kept employed in transporting provisions from Fort Capron, and from the regular camp to us on the line, while Smith was kept busily engaged in cooking victuals for the hands and moving camp from place to place.

We invariaby rested Sundays; a thing not always done by Surveyors. Once, however, we lost a day, and for several weeks worked on the Sabbath and lay up Monday, supposing the latter to be the day of rest.

In travelling through the brush and saw palmetto, we of course wore out clothes fast, especially pantaloons. When worn off to the knee, we usually patched and pieced them with raw deer skin, hair outside, which answered a very good purpose. Frequently our breeches legs wore off while we were away from the camp, without the means to mend them, and by the time the wearer went two or three days in this condition, walking continually through brush, briars, and saw palmettoes, his legs generally presented

the appearance of having had an attempt at amputation made by a child with a dull saw, who had worried it from the foot to the knee, without being able to get deeper than just through the skin. Such rakes across that very sensitive part, the shin-bone, the reader may imagine, were not generally attended with very agreeable feelings.

CHAPTER VI.

In this connection it would, probably, not be inappropriate to relate an adventure with a panther, a very ferocious animal inhabiting almost every Florida swamp and hammock. This animal, in natural history, is appropriately termed the American lion. He is a powerful beast, able to destroy animals much larger than himself, and has frequently been known to carry off and devour, in some instances, even grown persons. But to the adventure:

It was our custom to set aside, out of every two or three weeks, a day for the purpose of washing and mending our clothes, together with other little matters necessary to be done for the comfort of a camp life. On one of these interesting occasions, one morning about nine o'clock, while all were plying the needle and scissors with the utmost assiduity, Tap looked up from his work and spied,

not more than seventy yards from where we sat, a huge panther, half hidden behind a large pine, peeping at us, and cogitating within himself, no doubt, as to what steps he should take in order to procure one of us for his breakfast. Scarcely had Tap cried out, "Look at the panther!" before all were on foot and gave a simultaneous shout for the dogs, which sudden and boisterous proceeding the panther not understanding, took to his heels with all his might. The dogs (Bull and Cash) saw his first leap, however, and scampered off in pursuit, encouraged at every jump by the almost incessant yells of the boys. In the hurry of the moment Tap snatched up the gun, the Captain and Sile, each a large hickory club, Ralf the jacob staff, and myself a butcher knife, all of which were brought into full requisition, as will presently be seen. We endeavoured, by loud shouts, to keep the dogs encouraged, and by straining every muscle to keep within hearing of them, which we succeeded pretty well in doing, by taking advantage of near cuts.

The scene was a ludicrous one in the extreme. I had on but one shoe, and Tap had none. Ralf had pulled off his shirt to wash it, and Sile his unmentionables for a similar purpose, and, of course, they would not take time to put them on. There wasn't a hat in the crowd.

Picture to yourself, reader, a set of fellows in the above plight, running through the woods as though old Nick was after them, falling over pal-

metto roots, scrambling through tie-tie swamps, and plunging into sloughs, and you can form some idea of the scene.

For about an hour the race was continued with great energy, but at last the dogs bayed, and we knew he had treed. In a few minutes we arrived at the spot, and sure enough, there, perched snugly among the boughs of a little pine in a fern pond, sat the panting beast.

"Treed, hey!" cried Ralf, "treed, are ye? Don't be glaring down upon us with them great green eyes—it won't do you any good, old fel, your time's up. Oh, you sneaking villain! you thought you'd have a glorious breakfast of one of us this morning, but the tables are turned. We don't expect to eat you, that's a fact, but, Jeeme's river! what a lot o' shot bags we'll make o' that yaller hide o' your'n!"

A dispute next arose as to who should shoot. Tap had the gun, and was unwilling to give it up; he was but a boy, and we feared his excitement might cause him to miss. A deafening roar from the gun, however, settled the dispute—Tap had fired. A loud scream, followed by a hideous growl, told a tale of pain and rage as the result. In a moment more he sprang from the tree and again took to his heels; but, being badly wounded, ran only a short distance, and squatted under a thick bunch of fern. Seeing him squat, and fearing he would tear both of our dogs in pieces, the Captain, Ralf, Sile, and myself, determined to go

to their rescue. When we got within ten yards of the panther, he made a desperate spring for us, but was met by the sharp point of Ralf's staff, which happened, luckily, to stick through the skin of his back near his shoulders. He then whirled over on his back to play the clawing game, and Ralf pinned him in this position to the ground, and there held him with some difficulty, while, at regular intervals of about one second, the Captain's and Sile's clubs descended upon his head, and my butcher-knife sank to the hilt in his body.

The fracas lasted but a few minutes—he was a dead panther. In his desperate struggle for life he stripped my right arm of a shirt sleeve, and left sundry red marks across Sile's bare legs. This panther was the largest one I ever saw, measuring from the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail nine feet and two inches.

On the Sunday following our somewhat dangerous panther fight, as well as I now recollect, late in the afternoon Ralf and myself concluded to take a walk, partly for exercise and partly for the purpose of reconnoitering a portion of country to the south of us, which none had as yet explored. On our return to camp we chanced to pass a small hammock about sunset, in which we noticed a large flock of turkeys flying up to roost. Having no gun with us at the time, I took particular notice of the spot, intending to come out next morning before they flew down and shoot

some of them. On reaching the camp I put the gun in order, all ready for the morning's sport. In the morning I arose some three hours before day, and started alone for the hammock, thinking it much nearer day than it really was. When I reached the thicket, instead of waiting on the outside, like a sensible man would have done, I strode right into it, about where I thought the turkeys were roosting, and stopped to wait for daylight.

I had sat but a very few minutes, leaning against a tree, when my attention was attracted by the noise of something moving cautiously in the leaves just before me, and, as well as I could judge, not more than ten or twelve paces off. My first thought was that it was another panther, and the noise I heard was the adjustment of his feet for a spring upon me. I immediately, but slowly and cautiously, slid around to the opposite side of the tree, and arose to my feet to await the result. I had not remained in that position, however, more than three or four minutes, before a rustling in the leaves, similar to the one first heard, proceeded from behind me. Knowing it could not possibly be made by the same thing that caused the first, I at once felt that I was between two fires, and in the most imminent peril. I was at a loss to know *what* to do. If I should start to go in any direction, I knew not but I might go precisely to the very thing I wished most to avoid. Presently a low whine, terminating in a most

hideous growl, not more than ten feet from me, made my hair stand straight on end. At this juncture I determined, as a last resource, to aim as nearly at the spot as possible in the pitchy darkness, fire, and trust to Providence for the rest. Another blood-freezing growl, and I fired.

CHAPTER VII.

At the crack of the gun, a hundred wild shrieks burst upon my astonished ears from every direction, that made my very heart jump into my throat. The truth flashed upon me in a moment—I was surrounded by a large pack of hungry wolves, bent on an early breakfast of my flesh and blood. I knew there was only one chance to escape them, and that was by climbing a tree. The one I was then standing behind was too large for me to climb—it seemed a bad chance; but there being no time to lose, as the bloodthirsty brutes were closing up around me, I determined to rush in some direction until I came to one I could climb. Fortunately, I proceeded only a few steps before coming to one of suitable size, and the reader may rest assured no time was lost in dragging myself up out of reach of the voracious creatures.

Climbing some twelve or fifteen feet up the tree to a large limb, I straddled it to wait quietly for

daylight, and consider how to proceed in order to extricate myself from this very unpleasant predicament. The wolves gathered thickly around the tree, and made the whole neighborhood ring with their hideous and incessant yells of disappointment until morning. As soon as it was light enough for me to see distinctly, I took aim at the largest of the pack, and he bit the dust. Turning my other barrel to another, he shared the same fate. At this the whole pack took fright and scampered away to the thickest part of the hammock, leaving me in victorious possession of the field, or rather of the tree, where I remained till some time after sunrise, when I descended and made tracks for the camp, without so much as remembering I was out on a turkey hunt. It can scarcely be necessary to add, that this was the last time I went alone, before daylight, to hunt turkies.

It would be well, perhaps, just in this connection, to relate an adventure of Sile with a wolf, which, though not attended with much danger, was really one of the most interesting and laughable affairs of the whole survey: Smith having become tired of the cooking business, proposed to exchange places with Sile, which proposition, after consulting the Captain, the latter accepted. One day shortly after he began to act in this capacity, while he and Tap were alone at the camp, the oxen strayed off and did not return at night as usual. Next morning Sile called to Bull and started out to hunt them up, leaving Tap to take

care of the camp. When he had walked about three-fourths of a mile, while passing a patch of tall palmetto, Bull dashed into the thicket, and immediately a fight commenced between him and some other animal, which Sile could not see for the brush. Presently, however, the dog came trotting out toward the spot where Sile stood, and just behind him came a large wolf trotting after. The idea at once struck Sile, that he would slip behind a tree, and let the dog go by, and when the wolf came along he would "scare him to death." The dog trotted past as he desired, and when the wolf came up within four feet of him, he sprang suddenly out from his hiding place, threw up his arms, and gave a thundering "boo!" Instead of falling down with fright, or breaking his neck in getting out of the way, as Sile confidently expected, the wolf stopped short, turned his hair all the wrong way, and gave a low, angry growl in return. Sile waited for no more, but turned and took to his heels with all his might. About the third or fourth jump, his hat dropped off—whether it was pushed off by hair, which he thinks was standing pretty straight out at the time, or whether he simply ran from under it, he has never been able correctly to say. At any rate, he didn't stop to pick it up. Tap, who at the time was rubbing up the gun to take a hunt, spied Sile while he was yet nearly a quarter of a mile from the camp, coming through the woods, his hair streaming to the wind, like Nick was after

him, concluded at once that the Indians were after him, and that they would both be killed unless some immediate and decided step was taken to prevent it. He determined, however, to make an effort with that view, and while Sile was yet a great way off, he bridled up one of the ponies as quickly as he could, took the gun on his shoulder, mounted the pony, and sat waiting for Sile to come up and tell him the news, and all ready to "cut stick" as soon as he should hear it. Of course, when Sile came, the pony was again turned loose to graze.

It is nothing but fair to state that Tap always, and to the bitter end, denied that part of the story relating to him; but Sile as resolutely affirms it to be so. I shall not pretend to decide between them.

I come now to the record of an adventure or two of my own. One morning, while engaged in frying pancakes, in order to assist the cook, that we might get an early breakfast and a good start for a big day's work, I was so unfortunate as to burn one of my feet badly, which accident happened as follows: While holding the frying pan by the handle to steady it on the coals, the grease in it caught fire, and in giving it a quick jerk toward me, for the purpose of blowing out the blue flame which blazed up to the height of two feet or more, for want of proper skill in performing the manœuvre, poured the whole of the burning fluid into my shoe. Of course I gave the

laughing, heartless crowd a rather operatic specimen of an up-country dance, but I can conscientiously assure the reader that the operation afforded no amusement to myself. Having performed a series of gymnastic lurches right and left, fore and aft, upset half a dozen pots, kicked two quarts of sand into the tray of dough, and slapped my agonised foot into the pail of drinking water, I became quiet enough to proceed to an examination as to the extent of injury done. I pulled off the shoe, and along with it came the *dermis*, *epidermis*, and *cuticle*, even down to the *superficial fascia*, (skin,) from the whole of the top and one side of the foot.

As may well be imagined, I was entirely incapacitated for continuing my place on the line, and, consequently, had to exchange places with Sile, and assume the onerous duties and responsibilities of cook and teamster. Now it happened, unfortunately for me, that just at the time of which I write, the provisions began to run low, and it became necessary for me, as teamster, to proceed to Fort Capron to get a load, to which place, from where we were then working, it was very nearly three days travel through the woods, without the sign of a road to guide one aright. I felt many misgivings as to making the trip alone through that wolfy, beary, and *paintery* country, and particularly with a knowledge of the fact before me that, numbers of the Seminole Indians were roaming through the swamps and jungles of

that region, who were not wanting in disposition to scalp the pale-face wherever they might meet him, and were only deterred from doing so through fear. But there was no use to dread it; I had to go. Accordingly, two mornings subsequent to pouring the hot fat into my shoe, after an early breakfast, I made ready and started. Travelling the entire day through the woods, as nearly in the right direction as my semi-compass cranium could pilot me, I brought up at sunset on the side of, and about one hundred and fifty yards from, a small pond, and began to make preparations for spending my first night alone in the woods. First, I unharnessed the ponies and tied them to a couple of blackjacks, some twenty yards from the wagon, a little to the right of the direction to the pond, and after feeding and properly attending to them, looked around for a suitable camping place. I finally settled upon a spot between the wagon and pond, about one third of the distance to the latter, where there was a good log of lightwood and plenty of lightwood knots scattered around. Having kindled a fire, about which time it was quite dark, I lighted a few small chips and proceeded with the bucket to the pond for water. I found the pond surrounded entirely with a sort of marsh grass as high as my shoulder, and as thick as the hair on a dog's back. Through the grass and water, the latter some six or eight inches in depth, I had to burrow my way for twenty yards, to the open space beyond, before finding a place where

the bucket could be submerged sufficiently to fill it with water. Having accomplished this by no means easy or pleasant task, and turned round to come out again, my attention was attracted by a slight rustling noise in the grass only a few feet from me. Quickly I raised the light high above my head, and peered wistfully into the high grass all around, but saw nothing. Thinking, perhaps, I might be mistaken, my alarm (I am not loth to confess I was alarmed) somewhat subsided, and I started for my encampment. Scarcely had I made a single step, however, when a heavy, unmistakable movement in the grass again stopped me short. My eyes were directed to the spot whence came the noise, but every thing was still, and I saw nothing. I made another step, and the same frightful sound greeted my ears. Again I raised the light, and by the aid of its almost expired rays, I beheld, through an opening in the grass, a sight terrible enough to make the stoutest and boldest heart quake with fear. There lay, crouched to the earth, his ears lain close back to his head, his eyes gleaming like balls of livid fire, and slowly lashing his tail from side to side, an enormous panther. The imminent peril of my situation was at once manifest to my mind. The noise I last heard was his final adjustment for a fatal spring. I knew the slightest motion on my part would be the last forever. A thousand worlds, had they been at my disposal at that mo-

ment, would have been too little to offer for succour; but, alas! where was it to come from?

There I stood, thirty miles from the nearest human being, in the wild woods, face to face with one of the most ferocious animals—when driven to desperation by hunger—in existence, and not even the smallest weapon with which to defend myself.

I thought of home, of kindred, of kind friends. I thought how dreadful was my last end; how cruel the fate that destined me for it; how sad the intelligence to those who felt an interest for me, that I was gone, and none knew how nor where. But, while these thoughts were passing rapidly through my mind, and I stood gazing on the fiery eyes of the monster crouched before me, in the very act of making his leap, a thought struck me—hope flashed across my mind. I recollected Bull was at the camp, and knowing he was ever on the alert, I thought I might bring him to me by a whistle. The terrible creature gathered up his hind feet, and I believed the awful moment had come. A dreadful suspense; another low whistle, very low, and how my heart beat with rising hope as I heard Bull coming as fast as he could run through the bushes! In another moment he was at my side, and the frightened panther fled as if for his life, leaving me in a state of mind which may be better imagined than described.

I returned in haste to my encampment, de-

voutly thanking the Almighty disposer of all events for my almost miraculous deliverance from a death most horrible.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALTHOUGH feeling safe after escaping so dreadful a fate as that of being devoured by a panther, the terrors of this eventful night were not yet at an end.

I had brought down from the wagon, which, the reader will remember, was some distance from the spot which I had selected for a camping-place, my cooking utensils, and after cooking and eating supper, I spread my blanket upon the grass and was soon wrapped in the most profound obliviousness. About midnight, however, my slumbers were disturbed in a manner calculated to terrify one of stronger nerves than I could boast. The horses were jumping from side to side, snorting, and jerking back against the black-jacks to which they were tied, as if determined to break their necks; and Bull, with his hair all turned wrong end foremost, and uttering occasionally a low growl terminating in a whine, (indications of extreme fright) was doing his best to get under me. The fire had smouldered down to a few embers only, and as I slowly and cautiously raised

myself into a sitting posture, I could distinctly hear sticks cracking in several directions, as if breaking under the cautious tread of some heavy animal. Just waking out of a deep sleep, I sat for some time in a half stupefied state, endeavoring to realize the true state of affairs.

I was at a loss to account for the strange conduct of the horses and dog; for I knew that neither of them had ever exhibited the least fear for any of the wild animals inhabiting those parts—particularly the dog. What, then, could it be? There were certainly more than one of them; for, as already observed, the sticks were cracking in several directions, around me. Being one of the fortunate sort, however, who seldom lose presence of mind even amidst the most trying difficulties, I very deliberately reasoned with myself as follows:

Shall I build up the fire, or lay still where I am and risk the consequences? If they are wild animals prowling around with a disposition to make a supper of me, each moment I suffer the fire to remain unkindled serves but to increase the danger; but, on the other hand, if they are Indians, and they are seeking to take my life, the light will enable them to take a more certain and deadly aim. Considering, however, that if they were Indians and they felt disposed to kill me, they would do so anyhow—for they had only to wait till daylight to accomplish their purposes—and considering, too, that if they were animals

the fire would protect me, I determined to kindle it. Having thrown on the now blazing fire a large number of lightwood knots, I then lit a few small chips and proceeded to the wagon to bring out the gun, which, strange to say, I had not thought of before. Putting on fresh caps, I returned to the fire and sat with it across my lap, both barrels cocked, and the axe and a couple of pine knots, to be used as clubs, within my reach, to await any new turn matters might take, determined to fight to the last, come what might.

How long I remained in this position I know not, for the next thing I knew, I awoke about sunrise in the morning, and found the horses all quiet, and the gun lying across me. Not a vestige of the cause, whatever it might be, that gave me such an outrageous fright the night previous, was left. I never ascertained what it was, and can only attribute the singular conduct of the horses and dog to the near approach of Indians, whose design was to steal something from my wagon, but on witnessing my proceedings with the gun thought proper to withdraw.

I left this camping-place without much regret, as soon as I could hitch up my team, and on the evening of the following day arrived safely at Fort Capron, without meeting with any further adventure worthy of note. As soon as I arrived I began loading up the wagon, and got as much of the provisions on as the ponies could conveniently pull, and set out at an early hour in the morning

on my return for the camp. I progressed finely on that day, but about 9 o'clock on the morning of the second day met with an accident which left me in a woful plight. I had traveled but a mile or two from my encampment, driving leisurely along, when one of the wagon wheels came in contact with the end of a small log, and the axletree snapped in twain, immediately letting that part of the wagon down to the ground.

Here was an awful "kettle of fish!" forty miles to the camp—thirty miles back to Fort Capron—not a soul from whom assistance could be obtained nearer than those two places, and the wagon in a condition that it could not be moved.

It was out of the question for me to make a new axle without the tools to do it with, and if I had it I could not alone raise the wagon to put it in. I knew that any delay with the provisions would cause the Captain and hands at the camp to suffer; for they were then on short rations, and looking forward to my return with anxiety. The first thing that struck me, when I sat down to turn the matter over in my mind and come to some conclusion as to what was best to be done, was to take as much of the provisions as I could carry on the ponies' backs and push on to the camp, and get some tools and one of the boys, and return in a day or two for the wagon. But when I set about putting this plan into execution, I found that the pork, beans, and, in fact, everything I had, was in barrels, and I hadn't a single thing out of which a

bag could be constructed. After a long debate with myself as to what was the best mode to pursue under the circumstances, I finally hit upon and carried out the following plan, the result of which will soon appear: I stove in the head of of the pork barrel, and took therefrom four of the largest sized pieces I could get hold of, cut holes in them, strung two to each end of a short rope and placed them across the back of one of the ponies, as one would a pair of saddle-bags. So far, so good—one of the difficulties was overcome. But what of the beans? It was highly necessary to take some of them. Shut your eyes, ye timid! whose modesty is easily shocked, and I will tell you how I managed the beans. I drew off my unmentionables, tied a string tightly around the bottom of each leg, filled them with beans, and straddled them across the other pony, "just like a man." The thing looked so much like a man astride the pony, who had been sawed off considerably above the knees, that I could scarcely look upon it without experiencing some slight sensation of horror. After piling a vast number of lightwood knots on the provisions in the wagon, to prevent the wolves and other animals from destroying what was left, I mounted the pony in front of the breeches of beans, (for I couldn't make up my mind to ride behind such a looking object,) and went on my way rejoicing, at least for a time. But presently, as the sun mounted higher and higher in the heavens, and his rays

became hotter and hotter, I began to experience a sensation from my exposed legs anything but the most agreeable. I hoped they would soon get accustomed to the exposure, and when the sun turned the meridian would begin to feel better; but it was a vain hope. Every moment served but to increase the pain, and by twelve o'clock the torture was almost insufferable.

I now thought, for the first time, that if I would get some small bushes, tie the stems about my waist and let the tops hang down over my legs, it would be a protection from the sun's rays and afford relief at once. I did so, but it was too late. When I had tied them around me, the slightest touch of the leaves as they swung against my bare, baked legs, produced the most intense and excruciating pain. Of course I abandoned the bushes, preferring the hot sun to the agonizing touch of the leaves. I rode slowly all day, suffering more pain, ten times told, than in any similar period of time in all my life.

At about sunset as I was crossing a narrow but very thick strip of swamp, the mud and water knee deep, and fairly groaning with the intensity of my pain, I chanced to raise my eyes and was startled by a glimpse of the muzzle of a gun being thrust through the thick bushes toward me, and not more than four yards from my head. Before I had time to think how the shot might be obviated—for I was certain it was an Indian bent on taking my life—the gun fired, the pony

wheeled to the left, and I rolled in the mud. I imagined I felt the ball pass right through me; and while I lay half buried in the mud, wondering whether I should ever be able to rise, and whether my scalp would be taken while yet alive, Sile, whom the Captain had sent to meet and camp with me, pushed his way through the thicket and presented himself in the open space before me. When he saw my pitiable condition, instead of expressing feelings of regret, and making every apology for what he had done, as any Christian would, he just put his hands to his sides and set up a roar of laughter that I thought lasted one hour, without the least bit of intermission.

I was greatly relieved when I found I was not beset by the Indians, but could freely have "mounted" Sile for the fright he had given me. We camped near the scene of this last fright, but I slept very little. I rolled and tumbled nearly the whole night in great agony, and when I arose in the morning a scorching fever was upon me. I made out to ride the fifteen miles to the camp, when I took to bed and did not leave it for two long weeks, at the end of which time my legs shed skin like a black snake in the spring season.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Captain despatched two of the men after the broken-down wagon the morning after our arrival, who succeeded in getting it to the camp at the end of three days from the time of their departure, during which time the men at camp subsisted entirely on saw palmetto buds, which, by the by, if they were not quite so hard to "pull up," is no mean article of food.

My burnt legs and foot—the former by the scorching rays of the sun, and the latter by upsetting on it a frying-pan of hot grease, as the reader doubtless remembers—got well in due course of time, and I resumed my place, at the front end of the chain, on the line. I by no means regretted having to turn over to Sile again the cookship, as my experience in that capacity had not been altogether such as to inspire me with a very great fondness for it.

For some time after this we met with no other adventure worthy of record. We progressed with our work as rapidly as the nature of the country would admit, and to describe all the minutia would be but a repetition of descriptions of cutting our way through briary hammocks, sousing through lagoons, marshes and prairies, covered with water, and floundering through bamboo and

tie-tie swamps, of which I imagine the kind reader would soon tire.

While the work is progressing thus, day after day, in the same monotonous manner, I trust the reader will pardon me for introducing a subject which, thus far in these "scenes," has been scrupulously avoided, but one in which, I venture positively to assert, every one who has honored my scribbling with a perusal does now feel, has felt, or will hereafter, if life is spared, feel the most lively interest. The subject to which I allude is that of the tender passion. Who, having reached the age of maturity, has not felt its overpowering influence? its vicissitudes of pleasure, pain, hope, fear, bliss, and despair, which sometimes follow each other in quick succession, and always fast enough to keep one eternally in hot water?

True, the wild woods of South Florida, in the midst of savages and wild animals, and where the ribbons and head-gearing of the gentler sex were never known to flutter in the passing breeze, is a strange place to select for the scene of a love story; but the facts shall speak for themselves.

Ralf was the bore of the whole company. Endowed by nature and practice with an inordinate love of laughter and fun, he never lost an opportunity to gratify it, no matter at what expense or sacrifice to others. Not a day passed but the most bitter complaints were made against him on account of some mischievous trick, resulting in

the loss, inconvenience or pain of some one of the company.

One would wake up in the night and find his *soft* pine-knot pillow removed, and his head half buried in a puddle of mud and water; another would have a log of wood lain across his breast—not heavy enough to wake him up, but sufficiently so to cause him to dream of devils, hobgoblins, and frightful fiery-eyed spirits perched on his bosom, gradually sucking away his breath; and another would have a red-hot coal stuck to his toe, or a nest of sandspurs placed under his body ready to pierce the flesh whenever the unfortunate sleeper should chance to move. Fighting being strictly prohibited by a solemn pledge of all hands when we entered on the survey, under any circumstances whatever, the violation of which subjected the aggressor in the case to severe punishment, of course no satisfaction could be obtained in this way. Besides, it was not always an easy matter to catch him at these pranks; for, when any one of the party woke up and found himself in any of the conditions described, Ralf was sure to be found commingling his snores with those of the loudest of his sleeping companions, and, to all appearances, as sound asleep; and when aroused and charged with the mischief, always protested his innocence in such a manner that it was impossible to convict him of guilt. Every attempt to pay him off in his own coin was soon abandoned in despair; for

whoever undertook to play this game with Ralf was sure to come out at ten times "the littlest end of the horn." We had scarcely any alternative left, therefore, but to bear our troubles with a good grace, which we did until forbearance amounted to an absolute sin. At length, however, we discovered the young gentleman's vulnerable part, and made use of it to the accomplishment of our purposes.

Accidentally we discovered that his heart was touched with the tender passion. Sile, pretending to make a confidant of him in many little love matters, drew from him the whole story, which was just as we would have desired. He was in love—deeply in love—with a charming little Miss at home, to whom he had made love, nay, had actually made offers of marriage outright, and was rejected, but in such a gentle, friendly manner as only to make him love her the more, and resolve to redouble his efforts on his return home.

As I was on intimate terms with Mollie (for that was her name) and her family, Sile induced him to communicate the whole affair to me, telling him that I might be of incalculable service to him, through my influence with the family, in his suit. This he readily acceded to, and frankly asked my advice as to what would be the best course to pursue on his return home. He repeated to us every word of the last conversation between himself and Mollie, from the tenor of

which I drew the correct conclusion, that she had intended her refusal to his hymeneal proposition as a final and decisive one. This conclusion, however, we kept strictly secret from his ears, and led him, by every inducement, to believe that another good, strong effort on his part would certainly be crowned with success. At the proper time we urged him to write to her, to lay open his whole heart, and portray his feelings in such a manner that it would be impossible for her to look upon him with indifference. To this, however, he obstinately objected for a long time, saying that it was "agin his principle to put himself in a position in love matters in which black and white might be produced agin him in after time;" but when we urged upon him the danger of his losing her altogether by delay—that she, thinking he had abandoned all idea of obtaining her hand, would, in all probability, accede to the first proposition made by another, and he be left with his fingers in his mouth, his scruples in this particular were entirely overcome, and he consented that if we would "fix up a good, nice, proper love-letter" for him, he would send it and risk the consequences. Accordingly, that evening, when night had drawn her sable curtains around us, we three gathered up a quntity of lightwood knots, some distance from the camp, built a flaming fire, and by its brilliant light, with the heading out of a pork barrel for a writing desk, some time between midnight and day completed the

following letter to Miss Mollie. Should this letter chance ever to meet the eye of Miss Mollie, I trust she will pardon me for the liberty I have taken in publishing it to the world:—

PANTHER SWAMP, SOUTH FLORIDA.

MY DEAREST MISS MOLLIE: It does, I confess, smatter of presumption in me to trouble you again, either verbally, or with pen and ink, and so soon, too, after what has already passed between us, and after my solemn promise no more to inflict my attentions upon you.

Will you, my love, as some degree of palliation for my seeming presumption, and to some extent broken promise, take into consideration the feelings which I have told you I never felt before, and which I now again, from the fullness of an honest heart and true affection, reiterate? Will you calmly consider how grievous and sore must be my disappointment by the sudden blasting of hopes and prospects, which at first were faint, 'tis true, but which grew stronger and brighter with the lapse of time, under the influence of your heavenly smile, and with the increase of that tender feeling toward the *only* being whom, before God, I have ever fondly and truly loved—the only being I have ever looked upon as combining all those noble qualities and characteristics of her whom I would make my wife?

Think not, Miss Mollie, that the object of this note is to press to a speedy issue a suit which, I

confess with feelings anything but pleasant, has already met with a rebuff sufficient to satisfy any one with impulses less ardent than mine; but I cannot, without one more effort, resign the object of so cherished a hope.

I would not willingly inflict a single wound upon your feelings—not one; but it is hope, that bright beacon which lures men on to repeated and redoubled action, that leads me once more to trouble you upon a subject which is ever uppermost in my mind.

My object is, to crave your final—your *decisive* answer, as to whether I may or may not hope—however distant the realization of that hope—that your mind and feelings toward me will one day undergo a change; that you will, at least, endeavor to look upon me with more exalted sentiments than those inspired by the cold word "friendship."

I do not ask you to make a speedy decision in so important a matter—for truly it is an important matter; one in which is involved the happiness or misery of all your future life, and one that should elicit your most serious and dispassionate consideration upon every depending point; but I only ask that, if in accordance with your present feelings, I may entertain the least degree of hope, in time—no matter how long the time—you will endeavor to overcome your present indisposition to marry, in favor of one whose only solace is to love you.

Unfortunately, I have no fortune to offer you; none of the glittering metal that runs mad all men; no broad acres, or fields, to lay at your feet; nothing but an honest, loving heart, with the promise to devote the efforts of my whole life, be it long or short, to the advancement of your happiness and your comfort. Can I do more? Do you fear the act of its acceptance might be repented, because you have seen unhappiness the result of married life? Why judge the whole masculine race by the soul of one man, or even two? But this is a point upon which your own faculties of reasoning and judgment should be exercised—not mine. Do you ask why I harbour the lingering hope that prompts the writing of this letter, after all that has passed between us? I can only answer, it is the slender thread of hope inspired by a few words which fell from your lips involuntarily when last we met, and a love which I fear, should you again refuse my offer, even the strong arm of time will fail to eradicate.

But ere your patience is wearied, I will close by saying that, if you can find in your heart one reciprocal feeling for the sentiments herein expressed, and will tell me so, the object of my happiness is complete; but if not, then commit this sheet to the flames, and permit its contents quietly to sink into the depths of oblivion; and, oh! let not the smile of contempt or derision for the writer for a moment desecrate your lips, but rather let one heartfelt sigh escape your bosom in com-

miseration for him whose all is involved in your answer. RALF.

"How do you like it, Ralf?" inquired Sile, as I finished reading it over for his approbation. "O, it's capital," answered Ralf; "It's capital, only I think there's a *leetle* more mashed turnips and potatoes about it than necessary, but then I reckon it will do."

"You reckon it will do!" said Sile, "you *reckon* it will do? Why, I think it's one of the most perfect things of the kind I ever saw in my life. There is'nt a man in the world that could write a letter to fit a case like yours better than this one does, and yet you *reckon it will do.*"

"O, it's first-rate," said Ralf. "I was only thinking that when Mollie and me got married, and we should fall out some day, as married folks very often do, she would go and fetch out this letter and read it, and then tell me how deceitful I was before we got married, &c. &c.; but then when we git married, you know, I kin manage to git hold of this letter and burn it up, and that will put an end to the thing."

The letter was duly sealed and directed, and when Sile started to Fort Capron a day or two afterward for a load of provisions, it was deposited in his jacket pocket, to be mailed at that place. From the moment of Sile's departure, Ralf was in a constant fever of excitement. His peace of mind was gone. He could think of nothing else

but Mollie, and the effect his letter would produce upon her. While the other boys slept soundly, after eating their pork and beans, poor Ralf rolled and tumbled in the wire-grass for half the night before sleep would soothe his troubled feelings, which were constantly alternating between hope and despair.

During the day, when talking with me about it, as was the case whenever an opportunity presented itself out of hearing of the others, he often wondered what she would say when she read the letter. He would give anything to be where he could see her, and she not know it, to see the tears fall from her blessed eyes, for he knew such a letter could not fail to touch the tender chord of her heart.

Sometimes he got very low down, but when Sile returned we did every thing possible to keep up his spirits, and led him to expect a favorable answer, and succeeded finally in inducing him to dispel every thought of receiving any other sort; and by the time Sile started for another load of provisions, he was perfectly confident that he would get a letter from Mollie full of expressions of the most devoted love, and a warm acceptance of his proffered heart and hand.

Knowing very well that Miss Mollie would never answer his letter, Sile and myself concluded that rather than he should be disappointed, we would write an answer ourselves, and forge the name, which we did the night previous to Sile's

departure for Fort Capron, while Ralf was soundly asleep, and probably not dreaming of what a dupe he was being made.

When the wagon returned, Ralf was among the foremost who went to meet it, and was the first to inquire:

"Any letters, Sile?"

"Plenty," was the answer.

"Any for me?"

"Don't remember just now, think may be there is one with your name on it."

"Well," continued Ralf, "let's have it as soon as possible."

"Just you hold on now," said Sile, "till I can get it out of my pocket, won't you?"

By this time all hands had gathered around the wagon, eagerly inquiring for letters. Sile drew from his pocket a large bundle, and standing in the front end of the wagon, read off the names, and as each answered, he received his letter. Ralf stood trembling with excitement, and when at last his name was called, he grasped the extended letter with as much anxiety as if his very existence depended upon the contents.

"Ah!" said he, "that's it," as he held up before me a letter neatly directed, in a fine lady's hand, and as he turned off to read it, gave me a nudge in the ribs with his elbow, and made a sly wink with his left eye.

He sat down by a tree some thirty yards from the camp, and opened his letter. Whether it was

difficult for him to decipher the contents, or whether some other matter was the cause, I cannot tell, but certain it is, he remained in the same position, as if transfixed to the spot, for more than an hour, and would probably have remained so to the end of the day, had not Sile called out—

"I say, Ralf, what's the matter? Is it going to take you all day to read your letter? You seem mightily interested. What's the news?"

"Come here, fellers, I want to see you," said Ralf, beckoning to Sile and myself, and then walking off towards the margin of the lake, near which we were then encamped. We followed, and when we came up with him he handed me the letter, and said, "read that." I took it, and read aloud, as follows:

MR. RALF: Sir, your very "presumptuous" epistle has been received, and in answer thereto I have only to say, that I "can find in my heart" no "reciprocal feeling" for the sentiments you express, and hope in future you will not trouble me with any more such stuff. In conclusion, I would give you a little piece of advice, and it is this: next time you send a love letter to a lady, write it yourself, and don't get somebody else to compose one that any fool would know such a jackanapes as you never wrote. MOLLIE.

I had scarcely finished reading the letter when Sile set up a roar of laughter that no doubt aston-

ished half the alligators in the lake, in which, when I looked at Ralf's palid cheek, sunken eyes, and distressed countenance, I could but join most heartily.

"You may laugh, gentle*men*," said Ralf, "laugh as much as you please. You got me in this yere scrape, and now as you are the first to laugh at me for being such a big fool as to let you do it, just laugh now, till you pop your eyes out!"

This speech only made us laugh the more, which soon brought down all hands from the camp to see what was the matter. Sile related the whole story and read the letter, in spite of Ralf's entreaties and threats to prevent it, but we did not let Ralf, or any of the boys know but what the letter was really written by Miss Mollie.

Ever after this, whenever Ralf undertook to play off one of his little tricks on any of the boys, it was only necessary to say, "any late news from Mollie, Ralf?" and he was done. It was a subject he couldn't bear mentioned.

Soon, therefore, we could lie down at night to sleep with the comfortable assurance that we would not be awakened by the juxtaposition of a red-hot fire coal with our toes, and that we should not be put to the necessity of having to fish our heads out of a mud hole before morning.

Some six months after our work was completed, and we had returned home, I met Ralf one day in the road, told him the truth of the whole matter, and asked his pardon for the part I had taken in

it; but it was a long time before I could get the idea of a fisticuff sufficiently out of his head to induce him to do so; he did, however, at last, and we have been good friends ever since.

CHAPTER X.

From about the time of the transpiration of events recorded in my last number, we began to experience tough times in the swamp, and our troubles were not materially abated, as our faithful history will show, until the last line was run, the chain rolled up, and our faces turned homeward. In fact, we were not without misfortune until we were safely landed at our respective homes.

At the time above referred to, which was about the middle of April, there commenced a dry spell of weather, which, judging from its effects, was without a precedent—at least for a number of years. Ponds, creeks, branches, swamps, and every other place usually containing water, dried up, and the face of the whole country was left without that element so necessary for the sustenance of animal and vegetable life.

I speak not exaggeratingly, when I say we must have seen, during that dry spell of weather, at least five thousand barrels of dead fish scattered

over the beds of the dry ponds. These consisted of all sorts and sizes—from the largest trout, cat, and mudfish, down to the friskey little minnow.

During a whole month we were scarcely ever, at any time, out of reach of the almost intolerable smell emitted by the piles of these dead animals; and if the reader has any knowledge of the scent of putrid fish, he knows it is neither *salts nor cologne*. How I longed for Billy O'Neil's "nose that wouldn't smell!"

I have said we were left in the midst of a vast plain or swamp and prairie without water, which is true; but, as the reader may be inclined to doubt this part of the story—that we lived for months without water—I proceed to explain.

We had a substitute, of course, of the efficacy of which I shall leave the reader to judge for himself.

When the water dried up, a soft, thick mud was left in the lowest spots; and our manner of procuring water was to repair to these moist places, with a pointed pole some three or four inches in diameter, scrape away the dead and putrid fish, jog down the pole, and after waiting a sufficient time for the water to ooze into the hole, sucked it up through reeds carried for the purpose. Invariably the color of the liquid was precisely that of "Harrison's best black ink;" and Rogers even suggested the idea of putting up a few barrels of it to speculate upon when we should return home;

but owing to the difficulty of transportation to a market, the enterprise was abandoned.

It is useless to undertake a description of the appearance of the victuals cooked with this water—such as rice, bread, &c. It is enough to say, that they looked very much like they had been taken to a coal-pit and worked for an hour in coal dust, before being subjected to the process of cooking.

Up to this time we had been operating in the upper, or northern portion of our survey, and knew nothing of the topography of the country in the southern part. The Captain, therefore, during this dry season, determined to run his township lines in that direction, and thereby ascertain something of the nature of the country to which our future operations were to be confined. He accordingly ordered the cook to prepare six days rations, which was done. On Monday morning, bright and early, each man rolled in his own blanket his six days supply, and, as it was uncertain what sort of difficulties we might have to encounter, an additional provision of two days supply, uncooked, for the whole company, was put up and placed on Joe's back, who was required to do nothing but act in the capacity of pack-horse. He also carried the rifle.

For several miles we progressed finely, as we had only high and dry prairie to pass over, but at the end of this distance we entered a swamp—without much regret, however, as we knew there was no water to wade, and supposed it to be only

a short distance through. In the latter we were slightly mistaken.

The axemen were brought into requisition, and we went forward as fast as they were able to clear a path through the bamboo and tie-tie undergrowth.

Scarcely had we entered the swamp, when the everlasting stench of the dead fish burst upon us with almost stifling effect. Sometimes we passed small spots, lower than the surrounding ground, on which the water had stood longer than on other places, where lay putrid masses of fish to the depth of six inches or more. In passing these places each man held tightly his nose, and only released it at long intervals, and then but just a sufficient time to breathe enough of the infected air to enable him to keep his legs and march slowly on.

Dinner hour came, and instead of signs of an approach to better country, the swamp became more and more dense and difficult to pass, and discouragement began to be visible on every countenance. No one feeling disposed to eat, with the almost insufferable stench arising from every quarter, and constantly present to the organs of smell, we "propelled" without stopping to dine.

Night came and found us still in the swamp, and, to all appearances, as far from the opposite side as ever.

Tired and weak from the effects of the excessive labor of the day, and the debilitating influence of

the infected air breathed, we forced on our stomachs a respectable amount of supper, and retired, each man to his tussuck, or projecting cypress root, upon which to spend the night. We were forced to the tussucks and roots for rest, because the ground proper consisted of soft black mud, from ankle to knee deep, and was rather moist and "sloshy" to spread blankets and sleep upon. With the appearance of the first ray of light from the east on the following morning, we started again, in good spirits, with the hope that we should soon have the pleasure of seeing open country, far from mud and stench, but another day and night, and another, passed, and we were still in the swamp, the same as the first, except that we had become somewhat more accustomed to the odor emitted from the dead fish, and could devour our provisions with about as good relish as ever.

About an hour after dark, on the fifth night of our sojourn in the swamp, after having eaten supper and taken our usual places on the tussucks and roots to pass the night, our astonished ears were greeted with a noise which appeared to me, at the time, could be compared to nothing short of the shaking to pieces of a hundred cities, by an earthquake, or the crash of steel, booming of cannon, shouts of victory, and screams of the wounded and helpless in battle.

"What's that?" exclaimed Sile, as the almost deafening racket burst upon us, at the same time springing from his roost on an elevated cypress

root, and taking up knee deep in the mud below.

"What's that?" shouted Joe, as he followed suit, except that he landed stomach and face first in the mud. "What's that?" he continued, as he endeavoured to draw himself out of the mud. "Has the devil open'd his gates, and turned loose his prisoners to destroy the world?"

Every man mounted up on the highest place he could conveniently climb, to catch, if possible, some distinct sound that would lead to a knowledge of the cause of this bedlamic fuss in the swamps.

For a long time we listened in astonishment without being able to do so. At last, however, the noise grew somewhat less, and we were able to distinguish sounds.

The Captain was the first to come to a clear comprehension of the matter. He said that there was a hole of water about the spot from whence the noise proceeded, and all the birds, beasts, and reptiles, of the whole country around, had collected there to quench their thirst; which was the fact. Through the whole night the noise was kept up to such an extent that we slept but little.

Owls hooted, ducks quacked, cranes whooped, water-turkeys squalled, foxes barked, wolves howled, panthers screamed, bears growled, and alligators bellowed, all of which noises, commingling together, made "one grand fuss" frightful to listen to. On repairing to the spot next morning, we found the Captain's surmise to be true. There

was a deep dark hole of water, embracing I suppose about an acre, and around it was collected every conceivable variety of birds and smaller animals, (the larger had retired to their dens,) inhabiting the wild woods of South Florida. Of the birds there was no such thing as estimating their number. Of the alligators, it is sufficient to say that we counted three hundred and seventy in this small body of water, and they were all large, as the small ones had all been eaten up by the larger.

I shall have somewhat more to say of this place, and our tramp of six days, in my next.

CHAPTER XI.

The different animals in and around the hole of water, described in the last number—and particularly the alligators—judging from their voraciousness, must have been in a starving condition. When one of the birds which fed upon fishes dipped into the water to secure his prey, it was at the peril of his life. The alligators watched with longing eye every motion of these fish birds, and whenever a water-turkey or fish-hawk ventured within reach of their heads or tails, he was a 'goner.' I remember very well an instance that will show the temerity of the former bird, and the agility of the alligator, which should have

served as a solemn warning to the other birds that witnessed the scene: An alligator floated on the water with a portion of himself, from his head to the end of his tail, above the surface, whether designedly to entrap the stupid turkeys, I know not; but this I know, that one of them, probably mistaking the alligator's back for a floating log, perched upon it, and almost as quickly as one could think, the head and tail of the alligator were brought together, and the turkey passed down the enormous reptile's throat, kicking and fluttering as it went.

On making the least noise anywhere about the edge of the hole, the alligators flocked to the spot, thinking, I suppose, they might get something to satisfy their hunger, with such precipitancy as to make a sufficient splashing in the water to be heard several hundred yards. In this way Shepley called them up within a few feet, and amused himself and the crowd in shooting them. When one was shot and blood drawn from him, his comrades pitched him porpoise-like, and in less than two minutes his body was torn asunder, divided among, and swallowed by as many as could fight their way to the scene of blood. The first one shot, as the ball struck him, floundered some three feet out of the water, and as he fell back again gave a tremendous roar, which seemed to be a signal to all the others to roar too; for every one—save about twenty, which were too busy devouring the body of the wounded one—hoisted their heads

and tails, and commenced a thundering roar. The noise was deafening; the earth seemed fairly to quake under the hoarse and grating sound. The birds now commenced mingling their voices, and we had a repetition of the frightful din that had given us so much alarm the night previous.

In order to have a better view of the scene, Sile very imprudently climbed some twelve feet up in a tree which leaned at a considerable angle over the water, and while enjoying it in high glee, the branch upon which he stood gave way, and he fell with a tremendous splash into the midst of twenty or so large alligators beneath. For an instant he was invisible, but presently his head popped up, and with the first breath he shouted, "Help, or I'm gone!" We ran to him as quickly as possible, and although he was not more than six or eight feet from the shore, it was only by dint of the most incessant shouting, and flourishing of sticks and whatever we could lay hands on at the moment, that we succeeded in keeping the alligators from laying hold of him, until he had approached near enough to the bank for us to catch hold of and draw him out; and when we had done so, there were a half dozen of the hungry creatures within three feet of him, with mouths wide open, ready to tear him in pieces.

Sile's hair did not, as some men's have done when they were badly scared, turn white in a moment, but his face did; and in a husky voice, after acknowledging indebtedness to those of us

who had come to the rescue, he breathed vengeance against the whole race of alligators henceforth as long as his life should last—vowing never to let one live when it was possible to kill him, which vow I presume he has kept inviolate up to this time.

At this place the Captain rigged up his fishing tackle, and as fast as he could put his line in the water and draw it out again, he caught as fine looking bream and trout as I have ever seen; but, taken as they were from muddy, stagnant water, we did not eat them.

Only a few hundred yards from this spot, we came to high, open pine woods, when immediately all the troubles and hardships of the last five days, in passing through a dense swamp of eighteen miles width, were forgotten in the joy of beholding once more open, dry ground. No mind, however romantic, ever enjoyed a scene from the loftiest peak of mountain, more than we did this sight of simply open woods.

On emerging from the swamp, we found that we had but just provisions enough for the day; but this we deemed rather in our favor than otherwise, as we should be encumbered with less weight to carry; and as it was only four miles to the southern extremity of our survey, we felt certain that we could run the line that distance and return to the camp again by the next night without difficulty.

Owing to a great number of swamps, though

none of them were very large, it took the entire day to reach the end of the four miles, where, although cloudy and a little windy, we had a good night's rest on the wire grass.

Early the next morning, without stopping to take breakfast—for the simple reason that we had no breakfast to take—we set out on our return to camp. We shaped our course so as to get back without passing through the swamp, as the Captain believed that there might be found an open way around it without going much out of the way.

The day was dark and cloudy, but the Captain, not doubting that he was pursuing the right course, only once or twice through the day took the precaution to set the compass, which was slung by a string, shot-bag fashion, over his shoulder, and marched steadily forward.

During the entire day we passed over a monotonous country of prairies and low pine land, meandering a great number of swamps, though none of them of very great extent.

About sundown, while walking as fast as our tired legs would carry us, every moment expecting to set eyes on some familiar spot in the neighborhood of the camp—for all agreed that we could not be very far from it—the Captain, who was in the advance, suddenly stopped, and looking carefully around, said:

"Boys, here's a spot I've seen before—what place is it?"

"Yes," said Ralf, taking a survey of the neigh-

boring objects, "we've seen this here place before some time or 'nuther, but if any of you knows whar it is, you know mor'n I do, certain."

"Thank the Lord," said Joe, "we've come to some place we've seen before, and it wont be long before we'll be round old Smith's mush pot. I wish we war there now. O! I'm so hungry."

Sile thought he knew the place, and undertook to explain that it was only two miles due east to the camp, but without being able to make the balance of us comprehend the location; for the ideas of all were somewhat confused about it.

"Ah," said the Captain, who had all this time been looking about endeavoring to call to mind the place, "I see a section post down there about a hundred yards; go down to it Ralf, and see what the number of the section and township is marked upon it, and then we'll know all about it."

Ralf went down to the post, in accordance with the request of the Captain, and placing a hand on the top of it, took a long and earnest look at one face of it, then went round and took a similar view of the other. He next surveyed the four bearing trees standing at the four medial points of the compass, for some time, as if to fully satisfy himself, and then shouted at the top of his voice:

"Haevens and yeath! Captain, this here is the very identicel post we set up last night. Here's where we camped; for here's the fire, and here's where we slept on the grass, and here's our tracks where we started off this morning."

"What!" exclaimed the whole crowd, as a thrill of despair darted through every mind.

"What!"

"True as I live," said Ralf, "come down and see for yourselves."

"Impossible," added the Captain, after a short pause; but on going down to where Ralf stood, a single glance sufficed to know that it was too true,—we were precisely where we had started from in the morning.

Of course a tremendous change came over the spirit of our dreams.

Joe's pot of mush vanished into thin air, and he groaned deeply. His face assumed a most hideous expression at the absolute certainty of another night without supper, another day without breakfast or dinner, and twenty-two miles on a line through a rugged country to walk before we could get any thing to stay our clamorous stomachs.

Joe's face was not the only one that grew long at the doleful prospect.

"Never mind, my hearties," said the Captain, encouragingly, after a long and painful pause, "never mind, it's unfortunate, but we must make the best of it. To-morrow we'll be a little more particular about our course, and by this time to-morrow evening we shall be at camp snug enough, and as happy as if no misfortune had ever befallen us."

"But, Captain," interposed Joe, as the big tears

involuntarily rolled down his cheeks, "we'll starve before we git there; I know I shan't be able to walk to-morrow, for my knees are so weak now, I can hardly walk."

"Hello, Joe," said Sile, "what are you crying about?"

"You lie, sir," returned Joe, sharply, "I'm not crying. If you want to know what makes my eye water so, a sand-fly got in it."

"Did a sand-fly get in both your eyes at the same time?" inquired Sile.

"None of your business," answered Joe, in anything but an agreeable tone of voice, at which all hands, notwithstanding the adverse circumstances surrounding us, made a desperate attempt at a laugh.

CHAPTER XII.

THE night being dark and cloudy, and in consideration of our tired condition, and the number of moccasin and rattlesnakes scattered through the country, we resolved to spend it on the same ground we did on the evening previous, and endeavor, if possible, to get rest enough to enable us to stand the tramp before us on the morrow. On proceeding to strike fire, which operation, as our matches had given out, had to be performed with

the gun, we found, to our great consternation, that Joe had lost the ammunition bag, with all the powder and lead, and none was left but the load in the gun. All hands agreed that it was better to sleep without fire, and risk the wolves, panthers and musquitoes, than to fire off our last load of ammunition, which might be necessary to use to procure game to keep us from starvation. We lay down, therefore, in the dark, upon the wire-grass, and endeavored to sleep, but troubled minds and a sprinkling of musquitoes prevented this for a long time. At last, however, we did so, and slept very well until about midnight, at which time the sky cleared away, the wind ceased, and it turned to be very warm, when the musquitoes suddenly made a descent upon us in such overwhelming and incredible numbers as to effectually drive away the balance of our night's rest. The musquitoes on Indian river were no where, in comparison, in number, impertinence, and blood-thirstiness, to these. It was impossible to sit, stand, or lie, in any position half a minute at a time. We could only march backward and forward with a pine-top in each hand, striking right and left with all our might to keep them from flying down our throats, and, in fact, eating us up. Nothing but slaps and groans, with an occasional execratory exclamation, as a larger number than usual alighted upon the backs of the boys and thrust in the flesh their long, sharp, blood-sucking probes, could be heard on all sides. Ralf, Sile,

and myself, after all hands had formed a circle and fought the hungry creatures from ourselves and each other, until each had received at least five hundred lashes with the pine-tops, besides extra slaps on the face with the open hand, with our physical strength well nigh exhausted, determined to try a strategem to get clear. We went to work with a hatchet and our hands to dig a hole in the ground sufficiently large and deep for us all three to get into, two working while the other stood by with a brush to frail off the musquitoes. After an hour and a half's work we got the hole deep enough, and then covered it carefully over with pine-tops to the thickness of a foot or more, and crawled under, with the comfortable hope, for some time, that we had outgeneraled the little scamps. They finally scented us out, however, and found crevices enough in the straw to admit them so thickly within that we were soon glad enough to get out where we could have elbow-room to fight them. I tried another expedient by climbing some forty feet up a black-jack, but it was as futile in result as the first. We had, therefore, no alternative left but to fight it out till daylight, which we did manfully, and with as good grace as the nature of the case would admit.

The aspect presented by each to all the rest on the following morning, beggars all description. Measles, scarletina, varioloid—nay, the veriest small pox itself, and all other cutaneous eruptions, were no where, in comparison. Every exposed

part of the men was so bitten, bloody, and pustulic, that not one of the crowd could have been recognized even by his most intimate friends. Joe's eyes were swollen until they were almost completely shut up. Ralf's upper lip was swollen until it hung at least half an inch over the lower, which horrid disfigurement, together with a closed eye, made him present a most repulsive, if not frightful appearance. The spirits of all hands, however, save Joe, were at a much higher point than could reasonably have been expected under the circumstances, as was evinced by some effort, though feeble, at joking each other on account of ugliness. The Major thought every man had a perfect right to laugh at all the rest, as all were about in the same condition. Joe had no little fun poked at him, for his loud complaints of his utter prostration, by Ralf and one or two others, who were not in such a humor as to tender sympathy.

We left our camping-place very soon after the appearance of daylight, and set off in the same direction we had done on the previous morning, it being the desire of all to find a way around the swamp, if possible.

It had again clouded up thickly, remaining so all day, with an occasional sprinkle of rain, and the Captain had frequent recourse to the magnetic needle, but owing to the great number of swamps of various sizes we had to meander, it did us very little good. In going around one swamp we some-

times got behind another, in going around which we were thrown entirely out of our course, and the compass was of but little service unless we had followed a direct line through swamp and lagoon. We could travel but slowly, having been then more than thirty-six hours without food, and with only an hour or two of sleep for the last twenty-four.

Noon passed away, and the larger portion of the afternoon, and still we came to no place we had ever seen before; and, as the prospect for another night in the woods without fire or food became more probable, and the cravings of hunger more unsupportable, utter despair was more and more plainly depicted upon every countenance.

Some two hours before sundown, all hands were cheered by the sight of a small column of white smoke rising in the distance directly ahead of us. The sight of the smoke for a moment inspired hope, because, as Smith had been ordered to fire the woods whenever we should overstay our time, the smoke of which might serve as a beacon to guide us to camp, it led us to suppose we must be somewhere in the neighborhood of Smith's range. On approaching the spot from whence proceeded this smoke, we found it was only an Indian camp which had been abandoned a day or two previously, and a log which the Indians had set on fire was still burning. From this burning log Ralf and Joe each took a chunk of fire, determined

not to pass another night without that important element of protection against the musquitoes.

We had tried hard all the time to get a shot at a deer with the load of ammunition we had left, but could not get the chance we were willing to risk, as our condition was now becoming desperate, and the loss of the gun's charge might be our ruin. While trudging along, Ralf spied a small bird walking about a mud-puddle on the edge of a swamp, which he succeeded in killing with a pine-knot. It proved to be one of that species usually denominated "fly up the creeks," and, under ordinary circumstances, would not have been considered much of a delicacy, but we looked upon it as a real prize. When dark overtook us and we could go no further, we built up a fire and proceeded to cook our bird, which, with an equal division of his carcase among all hands, was soon accomplished, and all seemed to relish it immensely save myself. Although in a starving state, my stomach absolutely revolted at the smell and taste of the thing, and I could not eat it. I therefore laid my portion of it under the pine-knot which served as my pillow, supposing I might be able to eat it in the morning.

Soon after dark it commenced raining in torrents, and continued to do so without abating until morning; but exhausted as we were, this interfered but little with our sleeping, for we rolled the blankets around our heads to prevent the rain beating directly in our faces, laid down

on the ground, and slept as soundly as if comfortably covered up in warm feather-beds. True, we awoke in the morning and found the water some three inches up our sides, and our bodies and limbs chilled and stiffened, but we slept well.

Feeling in the morning that it was impossible for me to proceed further without some nourishment, I determined to devour my portion of the bird at all events, but on looking for it where it had been placed the night previous, found it was gone; but as Joe was vomiting and exceedingly sick at his stomach, I had not much difficulty in accounting for the manner of its disappearance.

The dark clouds which for the past three days had obscured the sky, and been the source of all our trouble, having spent themselves during the past night, the sun now rose clear and shone brightly, and we could shape our course with some sort of certainty. Had we been able to march we would very soon have reached the camp; but in our starving condition, worn out with traveling and benumbed and chilled by the rain, we made but slow progress. At first we could scarcely move. Joe begged us manfully to leave him and go forward until we found the camp, and send Smith after him; but to this of course we objected so long as he was able to drag one foot after the other. After long persuasion and some threatening, we got him started.

We had scarcely proceeded three hundred yards from our camping place, before a very large buck

presented himself broadside to us as if inviting a shot, and not more than fifty yards distant. The Captain having the gun at the time, (kept dry through the night by covering with pine-bark,) raised it to his face, and taking deliberate aim, fired.

At the crack of the gun the buck threw up his tail and ran for the swamp as if nothing had happened, and we thought he was lost, but he only went a hundred yards or so before we saw him fall. We hastened to the spot as quickly as possible, and for fear he might get away, I hastened to stick my sharp butcher knife to the hilt in his neck. The moment the knife entered, as quickly as one could think, he placed his two hindmost feet against that part of my body just below the breast bone, and sent me flat on my back some ten feet in the rear. He then sprang up, and as he started for the swamp again, ran against Sile and knocked him heels over head. He made but a few jumps, however, before he fell, and he had hardly got done kicking when each man had a steak from his quarters, and was hurrying back to the fire to roast it. Large chunks of it were placed on the fire, where it was suffered to remain only long enough to scorch the outside, and was devoured without salt, while the blood from the inner portions ran down our chins. Not one of us was able to retain it on our stomachs, as a matter of course. We butchered the deer, and each taking a portion of him, started again for the camp,

and succeeded in reaching it about three o'clock in the afternoon, after fasting nearly sixty hours, and traveling through wire and prairie-grass all the time.

We found Smith laboring under serious apprehensions that we had fallen into the hands of the Indians, and would never return. The Captain ordered him to prepare a pot of soup for the men, and it was with difficulty that he could restrain them from partaking of solid substances, which would have acted the same as the raw venison.

All of those engaged in the survey, whose eye may meet this, will doubtless vividly remember the scene recorded in this chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

It may be readily inferred by the reader, that for some days after the starvation, fatigue and distress, result of events recorded in the previous chapter, we were too badly "used up" to do much business. In fact, for three days the larger portion of us were scarcely able to stir from a recumbent position at all. Smith, whose kindness, as manifested on this occasion, in taking care of us in our utterly undone condition, I shall ever remember with feelings of the most profound gratitude, went into the woods and gathered a

large quantity of green moss, with which he made us comfortable beds in the grass, where we lay almost helpless, and were fed by him on soup made of such materials as were at hand, as often as was required, until we began to be able to help ourselves.

Joe Rogers, of whose gluttony, from remarks occasionally dropped in the course of this narrative, the reader is already aware, would eat at the risk of his life, in spite of everything that could be done to prevent it. At midnight, while others slept, he would sneak up from his mossy couch, and go to the pork barrel and biscuit tub, where he gorged his irritated stomach with these articles without the first apparent thought for the consequences, and almost died from the effects of it each time.

For three days I thought he would die, despite everything the Captain and Smith could do for him; and when I saw the great lumps of pork he vomited up, and heard him swear to the bitter end that he hadn't eaten a single mouthful, I almost heartily wished he would. The means we had to resort to at last to prevent him killing himself, was to establish a regular watch or guard, which we kept up every night, taking turns, until he so far recovered that he could be allowed to eat.

After a time, we began gradually to mend, and at the end of a week were in tolerable condition to resume our duties on the line.

There was still a portion of our survey to the

westward, which we had not yet seen, and the Captain now determined to push operations in that direction.

Smith was again set to work to prepare six days rations for each man, and on Monday morning bright and early, although still not entirely recovered from our prostration, each man cheerfully shouldered his heavy knapsack, and we again plunged into the prairies and swamps.

In order to provide against every possible contingency, one of the ponies (old Bet) was packed heavily with provisions also, and, in charge of Joe, who was still very weak, taken along with us.

The country, in the direction we were now pursuing, consisted of small prairies, small swamps, and almost any number of bay-galls of various sizes, from a few hundred feet to half a mile in width; some of the latter excessively thick, and difficult to cut a passage through.

On the first day of our march in this trip, nothing of particular interest occurred. We trudged slowly through swamp and prairie, and when dark caught us we were only two and a half miles from the camp. We had now plenty of pure water, as the rains had set in, and consequently got along with much less suffering on this account than on the former six days trip—that is, so far as drinking was concerned. We also had much water to wade, and were wet from head to foot from day's end to day's end.

Soon after we had left our camping-place, on

the morning of the second day, our dog (Bull) ran into a small but thick bunch of bushes we were passing, and out jumped the biggest sort of a panther, frightened by his approach, not more than fifteen feet from where we were walking.

The panther made for a small bay-gall about two hundred yards distant, as fast as he could put it down, with Bull as nearly at his heels as he could keep, yelping at every jump. They both disappeared presently in the bay, but in a few moments afterwards we saw the panther scaling up a tree about the middle of it, as if he thought Bull was right after him and would catch him before he could reach the top.

When we had looked at and admired him, perched amongst the topmost branches of the tall tree, for some time, Tap made a proposition, (as we had no gun to shoot him, Joe having taken that and gone on ahead,) that we cut the tree down, and it was immediately seconded by all. We agreed that one should go in and cut the tree, while the rest should scatter around the bay and take stands at different points, so that, should he not be killed in the fall, by whooping and yelling, they might prevent him from leaving the bay, and make him take up another tree for a second chance.

The next question was, who would go in and cut the tree, with that enormous and ferocious brute in its boughs?

None expressing a desire to take upon them-

selves that part of the design, it was determined that we should draw straws, and whoever got the longest should be the man.

Tap soon had the straws prepared and we commenced the drawing, and I, in perfect accordance with my usual luck, got the long straw.

Knowing the danger attending the undertaking, I dreaded it; but to have backed out would have brought down upon me ridicule, and taunts of cowardice, unendurable. I therefore, without hesitancy, laid off my pack and walked in, axe in hand, to perform the duty.

The bay was immensely thick, so much so, that I had, in many places, to cut a way through the bamboo vines with my butcher knife, and then had to crawl sometimes ten or fifteen feet on hands and knees. After a time, however, I reached the tree, and having cleared away a sufficient space to enable me to swing the axe tolerably clear of the vines and bushes, commenced work.

At the close of about half an hour, during which time the panther kept his large green eyes steadily fixed on me from above, and the end of his tail in constant motion from right to left, the tree began to crack and show signs of falling. The panther now exhibited indications of uneasiness, which grew more and more marked at each stroke of the axe, and I greatly feared he would either climb rapidly down the tree, leaving me no time to get out of his way, or spring down upon me outright.

As time was now getting precious, I went at it earnestly, without raising my head to see what was going on above. My feelings were greatly relieved when the tree gave two or three loud snaps and started to fall, amidst the shouts of the boys outside. But the relief was only momentary; for, imagine my feelings, on looking up as the tree was going over, to see the panther coming down the body of it, head foremost, with his ears lain back to his head, and his eyes looking like two balls of fire, glistening with fear and rage. I thought my last line had been run—the notes of my last "scene" taken; but, like Davy Crockett, when the Mexicans got him hemmed in a corner, I determined to sell my life as dearly as possible—there being no chance to run—and as he came I drew my trusty old butcher from its sheath, and stood ready, in a striking attitude, to give him one plunge that would reach the vitals before he could accomplish his purpose. Fortunately for me, however, when within ten feet of where I stood, and about to make a spring for me, he placed his feet upon a loose piece of bark on the side of the falling tree, it slipped and he fell to the ground, striking some four feet from me, and scampered off into the bushes, and up another tree, some twenty yards off. I immediately returned to the open woods, and informed the boys that if they had any idea of drawing straws to determine who should cut down the next tree, they need not consider me as a participant in the game. So we left

him sitting on the tree, and went on our way rejoicing.

On the afternoon of this day we came, to our astonishment, to high, open pine woods, almost mountainous. We were as much rejoiced as surprised; for, in this direction, we expected to find scarcely anything but swamps and bays. This ridge or streak of mountainous country, we afterwards learned, was a continuation of the same which commences some hundred and twenty miles to the north of where we were then working, known as the Sand Mountains, and running north and south about the middle of the peninsular, and sometimes not inappropriately termed the backbone of the same. I have never seen any mention made of this singularly mountainous country in any of the descriptions of Florida. Something is said of them in Sprague's "History of the Seminole War."

CHAPTER XIV.

These sand hills are exceedingly barren, the growth of which consists entirely of low, scrubby pines, knotty black-jacks, and stunted wire-grass. But, notwithstanding the barrenness, the number of deer roving over them was truly astonishing. We scarcely ever travelled a mile on a stretch

without seeing one or more large droves of them, numbering from twenty to fifty in each drove. Sile, Ralf, and myself determined to indulge in a fire-hunt when night came, as we were sure it would afford *rare sport*.

On account of the steepness of the sand hills, and the difficulty in making the proper measurements with the chain, having to level it every time it was stretched, we made but slow progress; but it was much more pleasant than floundering through the swamps, and all hands were in fine spirits.

We found this country of hills interspersed with beautiful clear water lakes of various sizes, from a few hundred yards to several miles in diameter, and generally of a circular shape, surrounded by a sand beach twenty or thirty yards in width, almost as white as snow.

About the middle of the afternoon of our second day out, in running our township line, we passed along the southern shore of one of these, about three miles across, and came to a swamp so thick and boggy that old Bet could not get through with her load, and Joe was sent with her around the swamp and another lake, the opening of which we could see to the southward, and with which the swamp was joined, while the rest of us should pass through the swamp, which we supposed to be the only connection between the lakes, and meet Joe on the other side. After cutting our way through the thick swamp for some distance

we came to an open, clear water connection between them, some two hundred yards in width, which at first we thought impassable on account of its depth, but on noticing a row of small cypress trees, some fifty yards apart, extending across at one point, and supposing they must grow on a ridge of sand thrown up by the action of the water from each lake, we determined to attempt a passage. We found our supposition with regard to the sand-ridge true. It proved to be about four or five feet wide, with deep water on either side, and not very shallow on the ridge itself. Fortunately one of the boys discovered part of an old Indian canoe lying near the shore, which would serve admirably to carry over our heavy packs upon, and keep them dry. We accordingly placed all our plunder on board, after dragging her into the water, and started across, pushing the boat before us. We had only proceeded about fifty yards from the shore—the water armpit deep, and at every step getting deeper and deeper—when an alligator rose to the surface, some twenty feet ahead of us, immediately in our track, whose size and unusual viciousness marked him as an "old residenter," and who, "knowing his rights, dared maintain them."

As soon as his head popped out of the water, he turned towards us, and, spreading his enormous mouth to its utmost extent, gave vent to one of those hoarse, guttural, frightful sounds peculiar to the alligator, indicating imminent dan-

ger should the object of his wrath come within reach of his power. We halted, and for a moment stood still, considering what was best to be done, as he came rapidly towards us with his mouth widely extended, and furiously lashing the water with his ponderous tail. When within ten feet or so, and neither his speed nor his fury seeming to abate, we concluded prudence might, in this case, prove the better part of valor, and we beat a precipitate retreat for the shore. As long as we remained on shore, the alligator remained perfectly quiet, content merely to watch our movements; but whenever we started into the water, he would begin to show signs of rising passions, which increased in proportion as we advanced towards him.

Having made several attempts to pass over, and being driven back each time, the Captain at last, impatient to be at business, proposed, if we should unanimously agree to it, that he would lead the way, and we would fight our way through, and cross over in spite of him. All hands at once agreed to the proposition, preferring, they said, to risk the consequences of a fight rather than be driven six or eight miles out of the way by *an alligator*.

The Captain took the lead, with his sharp-pointed jacob's staff in his hand in a convenient position for use; I walked by his side, pushing the old boat loaded with the compass and knapsacks; Tap followed closely behind, holding Bull

by the back of the neck, and the rest of the boys brought up the rear, armed with stout pointed poles of convenient size and length for offensive and defensive operation. The moment we started in, he commenced lashing the water with his tail, roaring, and snapping his great jaws at a fearful rate. When we had advanced some distance towards him, he opened his mouth, and made at us as if he would swallow the whole crowd, boat and all; but we moved steadily onward, ready to strike whenever he should venture within reach, without betraying the least concern at his presenee.

He seemed almost frantic with rage at our daring audacity, but played around at the distance of eight or ten feet without attempting to make a plunge at us. Finally, he sunk down out of sight, almost directly in front of us, and I thought the fearful moment had come when some one of us—and which?—must be made a sacrifice of to accompany the ugly beast on an exploring expedition to the bottom of the lake.

The two minutes after his disappearance was the most fearful period of my whole past life. Standing face to face at that moment with the fiercest panther of the forest, would to me have been far more preferable. The Captain, knowing the extent of the peril, made no stop, but said, in a firm tone, "Now, boys, prepare to fight; he'll probably rise amongst us and attempt to carry one of us off, but *he must not do it.*"

We pushed forward as rapidly as the water, then up to our chins, would permit, expecting every moment to be struck by him; but we passed the spot where he had sunk without getting afoul of him, and had begun to breathe a little easier, when he rose again, about three yards to the rear, and made at us from that direction. By whooping, and flourishing of poles, we kept him at bay, though he followed as closely as he dared do. The danger now was, that the water between us and the opposite shore was too deep to wade, and we should have to pass him again to get out. This, however, was not the case, and we passed over safely.

There was no one of our adventures, while engaged in this survey, that made so powerful an impression on my mind as this; believing, as I did then and do now, that the alligator, in water, is by far the most dangerous animal we have. To this day I often shudder when I think how nearly we must have passed this amphibious monster, crouched in the mud, and how easily he might have risen to the surface and carried one of us under, before the others could possibly have rendered any assistance to prevent it.

Now for the fire-hunt. We struck camp about sunset, and while the others were preparing coffee for supper, Sile, Ralf, and I were busy preparing a wallet of lightwood for the hunt.

Having eaten supper, I shouldered the fire-pan, Sile the gun, Ralf the wallet, and we started. At

the distance of about a mile from the camp I discovered a pair of eyes, and making sign for and receiving the gun, walked forward for the purpose of getting within fair gun shot. I had proceeded only a short distance when I discovered another pair of eyes, and, to my surprise, about four or five feet right above the first. Presently another and another pair became visible, until I distinctly saw and counted some eight or ten pair, all in a perpendicular line, and at a uniform distance of about four or five feet apart, one above another. This puzzled me exceedingly. At first the idea struck me that we had got into a whole family of panthers, and they were all climbing the same tree, for some purpose, at the same time. I was afraid to shoot, and would not do so until I had beckoned to the boys, who had stopped behind me, and asked their advice in the matter. They said, "Shoot, and risk the consequences;" and, taking deliberate aim at the lowest pair of eyes, I let drive. At the crack of the gun we heard a tremendous thumping on the ground, and knew something was shot down; but, on the clearing away of the smoke, there stood the balance of the game precisely where they were before I shot. I again took deliberate aim and fired at the next lowest pair of eyes, and, this time, a dozen cows, each with a tin bucket of buck-shot tied to her tail, could not have made more noise than was kicked up in that direction.

On cautiously approaching the spot, we found

one large buck lying dead, and, from the blood and other signs, together with the noise made in running away, we knew another was badly wounded. The next thing was to account for the strangeness of the appearance of the eyes being one pair above another, which was easily done, on examination of the ground. The drove of deer were coming down a remarkably steep hill, which formed an angle with the horizon of about forty-five degrees, and while the foremost was at the bottom the hindmost was at the top, and the others strung along at uniform distances between these two. This, from where I stood, made it appear that they were directly one above another, and suggested the idea of panthers climbing a tree.

We shouldered our buck and returned to the camp, resolving to rise early in the morning and search for the wounded one, as we knew he could not go very far. This, and other matters, will be treated of in next chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

RALF, Sile, Tap, Shepley, and myself, started at break of day, on the morning following our fire-hunt, to look for the crippled deer.

On reaching the spot, which we had marked,

by blazing a number of trees, we found, from the blood on the grass and other signs, that he was badly wounded, and, in all probability, but a short distance off, dead. We had Bull tied by the neck, and when we put him on the track, he led off in a southerly direction, with such eagerness that it took two of us pretty hard pulling to hold him back.

After following the trail for a mile, expecting every moment to come upon the venison, we came to a small lake, about three hundred yards across, in the centre of which was an island about one-fourth of an acre in extent, and, as we saw the tracks of the wounded deer leading into the water in that direction, we concluded he must be on the island. I told the boys to take their stands at equal distances apart, around the lake, so as to cut him off should he attempt to pass out to dry land; and if he seemed to be pretty badly crippled, to meet him in water deep enough to give them the advantage; and I would take the gun and go upon the island, and if he was not already dead, would either kill him or run him out to some of them.

Waiting until all had reached their places, and giving Bull over to Ralf, I started in. I found the fording pretty deep, as a hundred yards or more of the distance the water was up to my chin. I reached the island, however, in safety, and succeeded in keeping the gun dry.

The bushes were very thick, and I hunted about

among them some time before seeing anything indicating the presence of either a dead or living deer; but I stirred him up at last, and before I could get a chance to shoot, on account of the thick bushes, heard him plunge into the lake, some fifteen yards from where I stood, with the view of reaching the woods in the precise direction in which Ralf was stationed with Bull. I ran out to the edge of the bushes, and saw the large buck making for the shore, then in a direct line between Ralf and myself. Without any idea of shooting, as I knew the shot would be as apt to hit Ralf as the buck, or any other particular object in view, I raised the gun to my shoulder and sighted as if about to shoot. The moment I did so, I was surprised and greatly amused to see Ralf commence a series of springs into the air from the high grass in which he stood, throwing up his arms in the most approved theatrical style, and shouting, at a rate indicating the utmost power of his lungs, "Hey, Jinx, stop! hold! Hello!—Look out, there! Don't shoot this way; you'll kill me!"

Without taking any apparent notice of him, I continued very deliberately to sight; and he, supposing there was no chance to avert the shot, fell flat on his stomach in the grass, but not feeling at all secure in that position, remained but a moment, when up he jumped and again commenced his wild shouts and convulsive springs into the air, for the purpose of attracting my attention.

"Let down that 'ere gun, I say!" he yelled. "Don't you fire—if you do, and don't kill me, it's as much as your neck is worth. Hey! Hello! Thunder and sawdust! Wh-o-o-p-e-e—e!"

At this interesting point, fearing the buck's attention might be attracted by his outrageous clatter and capering, and turn its course in some other direction, I lowered the gun and shouted to Ralf to make ready to catch the deer whenever it should get into water sufficiently shallow to enable him to manage it easily. He immediately loosed the line from Bull's neck, and both of them started into the lake meeting the buck, and both caught him at a place where the water was about four feet deep, when commenced a fight, by the side of which the Major's memorable adventure in the creek swamp, almost sunk into insignificance.

I saw from my position that the struggle was going to be a deadly one, and as the water was too deep for me to go to him, I shouted to the other boys, stationed around the lake, to run to Ralf's assistance, which they did as speedily as possible. When they reached the spot, Ralf was so exhausted and torn by the buck's hoofs as scarcely to be able to stand. Bull, however, though nearly as badly used up as Ralf, hung to his hold by the throat, and with the help of the boys just arrived, the buck was soon *en route* for the camp, strung on a pole.

Late in the afternoon of this same day, while quietly pursuing our business, the Captain acci-

dentally casting his eye up to a hole in a large pine, discovered a bee-tree. As the sun was only about an hour high, and all the hands becoming exceedingly hungry for honey, we concluded to stop and cut it at once, camping there for the night. We laid off our packs, therefore, and went at it at once, so as to get the honey out in time for supper. Tap and Shepley were to cut the tree down, Ralf and I to stop the hole at which the bees passed in and out, and Sile and the Major were to take the honey out. Ralf having a large lightwood torch prepared, and I a bunch of moss to stop the hole, we stood in readiness to perform our part whenever the tree should fall.

The tree had hardly touched the ground when we were there, Ralf burning the enraged bees to death as they came out of their hole in search of some object to vent their spleen upon, and I endeavoring to stop their door, and thus make them prisoners until we were ready to walk into their store of sweetness. We found, however, that this was not so easily accomplished, as there were several holes, and before I could get one of them stopped, the bees were swarming about us as thickly as musquitoes at the Haulover.

As soon as they began to sting pretty freely, Ralf, the rascal, took to his heels with all his might, carrying the torch with him, which, however, he soon put out in the fight, while thumping and slapping about his ears as he ran.

But a minute or two elapsed before some five

hundred of them, more or less, had worked their way up my breeches legs, shirt sleeves, and into my bosom, and thence all around my body inside the shirt. In the fight, my hat got knocked off, and probably not less than one or two hundred more entangled themselves in my long, uncombed hair, and each seemed vieing with his neighbor as to the extent of damage he could inflict.

Of course the place soon became too hot for me, and seeing no other chance of getting clear of them, I made tracks, amidst the shouts of the boys, for an open pond some two hundred yards off, and didn't stop until I entirely disappeared beneath its silvery waves, where I remained as long as possible without coming up to take breath.

Rolling about in the water, and dipping my head under for some time, I went out on shore, took off my breeches and shirt and shook out of them a tolerably sized swarm of the drowned *varmints*, besides those remaining to be raked out of my hair.

At sunset I returned to camp, finding Ralf and the other boys luxuriating in the fine white-combed honey, and laughing no little at my misfortunes. I slept but little through the night on account of the burning and stinging sensation caused by the bees, and on rising in the morning, found I had a scorching fever, and my eyes both swollen until they were entirely closed, and each lip, at the lowest calculation, an inch thick.

As the reader may very easily imagine, I was

not in a condition to do business, and was therefore, left at the camp, with the Major to take care of me, while the Captain and the boys went forward with the work. My fever continued two days without abating, during which time I suffered vastly from the pricking and itching sensation all over my body.

On the evening of the second day the Captain returned to where he had left us, on his way back to camp, as the provisions were running low. After a good night's rest all round, we collected on large pieces of freshly peeled pine bark, the honey taken from the tree, which was no little, and set out for the regular camp.

We reached it in a day and a half, without meeting with any adventure worthy of record, finding Smith well, but, to use his own language, "shockingly lonesome." I, of course, knew how to sympathize with him, as I had myself had some experience, while laid up with a fried foot, in staying by one's self for six, eight, and ten days in those wild, wild woods without seeing a human being; and with nothing to drive away the feeling of loneliness save the deep-toned hoot of the owl perched on some neighboring tree, the dismal howl of the wolf, or shrill scream of the panther, while pursuing his nightly peregrinations in search of his prey.

CHAPTER XVI.

On arriving at camp Saturday noon, as stated in the preceding chapter, the Captain was very much surprised to find, by a report from Smith, that there remained but five days' rations. As we had to move our encampment into another township to the westward, the Captain concluded to do so that afternoon, which he had intended to devote to writing up his papers, so as to start the team early Monday morning to Fort Capron for supplies.

The move was effected, and we spent the Sabbath very quietly by a large lake, where a deep creek emptied into it.

Early Monday morning Smith was started with the team to Fort Capron, with orders to make all possible haste, as we should be entirely without provisions in four days' time. Soon after the wagon started in one direction, the Captain and men shouldered what provisions were left, for a few days tramp on the work in another, leaving me alone at the camp to work at the tailoring business, I being the only man in camp gifted with any talent in that line.

The best and only pair of pants I possessed were entirely worn off at the knees, presenting, at those two extremities, an exceedingly tasseled and

frilled appearance, and leaving exposed, from there down, a pair of legs no little streaked and torn by briars and saw-palmetto. Tap's was nearly in the same condition, and I was left, as above stated, to manufacture for him and myself, each, a pair of pants from six yards of tow cloth we had on hand.

Accordingly, soon after the boys had all gone, I set about the work,—first on the pair designed for myself. Spreading a blanket on the ground under the pleasannt shade of a live-oak tree, to be used as a table, I pulled off the old and ragged pair to use as a pattern, and soon had the new ones cut out and all ready for the needle. When this was done, instead of putting on the old ones again, as I should have done, I sat down in the cool shade, went to sewing, and was soon lost, in intensity of application to the work, to all objects apart from it. How long I had remained so I cannot tell, but was awakened from my dreamy state at last by a strong odor of burning cotton.

On turning towards the tent, imagine my feelings on beholding all one side of it enveloped in flames. I immediately threw down my work, without a thought for its safety, seized the tent cloth, and at one surge tore it from all its fastenings, and ran with it to the lake, where I soon had it sunk under the water, and the fire, of course, effectually "outed." I then returned to see to the safety of the various articles which had been covered by the tent, among which, and upper-

most in mind, were all the papers connected with the survey, knowing their loss would be ruinous.

With some difficulty, I saved them, with nearly every thing in the tent, but when I returned to my work it was not there. My old pants, which I had taken off to cut by, my new ones, together with the cloth to make Tap's new ones out of, were all burned up. I could have wept as I sat on the end of a log pensively gazing on the little heap of ashes, now all that remained of my last pair of breeches; but, being always a philosopher in time of trouble, I bethought me of the old proverb which says: "It's useless to cry over spilt milk," (burnt breeches,) and I became resigned to the loss.

The only garment I now possessed on the face of the earth was a hickory shirt, and as I was then in a neighborhood where clothes couldn't be borrowed, the reader may easily imagine the figure I cut for some time after this sore loss.

Late in the evening of the fourth day, the Captain and company returned to the camp, having eaten up all their provisions, expecting to find Smith there with a fresh supply, but in this they were mistaken. Smith had not come.

There still remained a small quantity of flour and a few beans, the latter of which, with a portion of the former, we cooked and ate for supper, and went to sleep with the confident belief that Smith would arrive, at farthest, against noon the next day. Next morning, rather than breakfast

on bread alone, made without salt or grease, we concluded to await the arrival of Smith before eating any more. Dinner and supper time came and went, and still no Smith. Hunger now forced us to cook the little remaining flour, which was made into a small cake, and cut into as many pieces as there were persons to divide it among. This done, that there might be justice all around, and no room for complaint or grumbling, (for among a parcel of hungry men, in an emergency like this, a square inch of bread is of immense importance,) the Captain took the tin plate on which it was placed, and telling me to turn my back toward him, took one of the pieces in his hand and, asked:

"Who shall have this piece?"

"Sile," I answered, and he came up and received it.

"And who shall have this?" continued the Captain.

"Tap," I replied, and Tap got it.

And so we went on until each was supplied with a portion of the unsalted, unshortened and unleavened bread, as equally divided as could be made by the eye alone.

The following morning the Captain took the boys and went out to run a line or two not far from the camp, telling me that they would be back against twelve o'clock, and if Smith came I must have a big dinner cooked, and that if he didn't come, I must make some shift for something to

eat, or we should starve if anything had happened to the team. What that "shift" was going to be, I could not tell. Smith had the gun, and we couldn't kill game; the hooks were all lost or broken, and we couldn't catch fish,—what could be done?

After turning the matter over for some time, I made up my mind that our dependence was upon the invention of some plan to catch fish from the neighboring creek, and, fortunately having a line, I set about it as follows: procuring a piece of hickory stick about one and a half inches in length, I cut a small niche all around in the centre, in which I tied the line, and then whittled off each end, or nearly so, and with this sort of tackle proceeded to the creek. After a long search I caught a frog with which I baited the stick-hook, and throwing it into the water quietly awaited the result. I had not to wait long before I felt a heavy nibble, and on drawing the line found I had a very large catfish, which I succeeded in bringing to shore. He had swallowed the frog and with it the stick, and when I pulled on the line, the latter being tied in the middle, turned crosswise in his stomach and held him securely.

Having in this way caught as many as desired, I returned to the camp, and removing the entrails, covered them up in the ashes to roast. When the men returned at noon, such a bait of catfish roasted without salt, as was eaten, is seldom witnessed.

The Captain now becoming alarmed at the pro-

tracted absence of Smith, took Sile with him and set out to see if he could get any tidings of him. He may have been attacked by the half hostile Indians, then roaming over the country.

After two and a half days travel, with nothing to eat save a few palmetto buds and whortleberries, as they could spare the time to gather them, the Captain and Sile arrived safely at Fort Capron, though hungry and weak, finding the wagon there, but Smith gone. The latter had left four days before in search of the ponies and mules, which had strayed off, and nothing had been heard of him since. Taking first a good supper and a good night's sleep, they then took Smith's trail to follow him up. Fortunately, and to the great relief of the Captain, they had only proceeded a few hour's walk, when they met the object of their search returning with the horses. Knowing our condition, the Captain lost no time in coming with the load of provisions to our relief. When they arrived they found those of us who had remained at the camp faring sumptuously on roasted cat and mudfish, (this being the only kind we could catch with the new fashioned hook,) without a particle of salt, and in health and strength, feeling none the worse for it.

The first few days this kind of fare was a bitter pill, but the more we partook of it the better we liked it, and at the end of the eight days we had all become fond of it, and felt that we could have lived months on the same, with no particular desire for better.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE law governing surveyors, requires that the variation of the magnetic needle shall be taken at least once in every township, which variation must be taken at a certain time—just when the pole-star reaches his most eastern elongation. At the time of which I speak, the star terminated its march toward the east at twelve o'clock, P. M., and rather than be roused from a sound sleep to assist the Captain in adjusting his posts, plumb lines and stakes, we usually sat up and amused ourselves as best we could until the time arrived.

Sometimes when this unpleasant duty was to be performed, after a hard days work, tired and sleepy, as we necessarily were, the hours between dark and midnight passed slowly and heavily. On one of these occasions, as all hands were scattered around the fire in different positions, patiently awaiting the slow progress of the star eastward, Shepley proposed that some one in the crowd should relate a story, so as to make the time pass as pleasantly as possible.

"Good!" was the response of every one; "who'll be the man?"

"Sile, Sile, Sile!" came from all sides of the fire.

"Well, gentlemen," said Sile, who was leaning lazily against the roots of a pine, with his head

enveloped in a large, red bandana handkerchief tightly bound in a large knot just below the occiput, and quietly chewing his tobacco, "I should be glad to accommodate you, but really I can't now think of a single thing out of which, by any possibility, a story could be manufactured that would amuse you. I hope you'll excuse me, and call on Jinx; you'll find him a pretty fair hand at yarning."

"No, sir, we can't excuse you," said I, "you can tell *something*, can't you? Come, begin, we are all attention."

"Well," replied Sile, throwing out his chew of tobacco, "if you insist upon it, I must try and stir up something. Let me see,—I'll tell you of an adventure of mine up in Middle Florida, once."

SILE'S STORY.

One night last winter—and a bitter cold night it was—Mathy Dawson, a burly, good natured backwoodsman, and I, being down in the fork of Alligator and Rocky creeks, were taking one of John Gorman's "reg'lar sockdoligin fire-hunts." For two long hours, or more, Mathy had trudged along behind me through pond, bog and palmetto patch, with a large yearling deer swung to his back, without a word of complaint.

"Look here, Major," said he at last, "s'pose we drap anchor first good place we come to for light-wood, and rest awhile; this 'ere fawn grows 'bout a pound heavier every ten feet I carry him, and, I swan, if we don't call a halt purty soon, I'll

begin to think we have killed the biggest buck in all the range."

"Well, Math," said I, "here is a good lightwood log, and there seems to be a pretty plenty of lightwood knots scattered around, so down with your venison, if you are tired, and let's have a fire going."

In a few minutes a large pile of pine knots were collected, and a bright, warm fire in full blast.

Pulling off our shoes and socks to dry them, we laid our tired bones down on the soft tufts of the luxuriant wire-grass, and soon fell, each of us, into a silent train of thought.

Suddenly Math aroused me by asking: "I say, Major, do you see them two little stars away over yander, towards 'Squire Campbell's?"

"Yes," I answered, "what of them?"

"Well," continued he, "I've hearn folks say them's courtin' stars, and they tell me when they are close together it's a good time to go a courtin', and if it's a fact, I was jest a thinkin' to-night would be a royal time to be out among the gals, for they're blamed nigh tetching one another."

"Halloo, Math!" I exclaimed, "have you got to gazing at the stars? Why, I shall begin to think there is some truth in what Joe Salter said the other night, down at the Judge's sugar boiling, about your being in love, if I catch you at those sort of tricks many more times. No better sign in the world of the tender passion, than to see a fellow always looking at the stars."

"Yes," replied Math, "I recon Joe thought he was monstrous pert that night, down to the Judge's, but I don't think what he said was so darned smart, arter all; and I kin tell you more'n that, from this out he's got to keep clear of my track, or me and him 'ill be apt to lock horns."

"Well, Math," returned I, "if there is any little love scrape between you and any of the girls, tell me all about it, old fellow; you don't know how it would help to pass off the time—besides, there is nobody here but you and I, you know."

"I haint got nothin' to tell," said Math, drily; but after a few moments of better reflection, he said: "Well, Major, you've allers bin a good friend to me, and if you'll promise never to say a word about it in all creation, I'll give you a full 'count of the hull sarcumstance."

"Good, then," I answered, "for you know I'm as mute as a cat in the sunshine, when I am requested not to mention anything."

"Ahem!" he ejaculated, at a loss for a starting point, and withal not a little embarrassed. "Ahem! well, I recon you knows Sallie Dykes—don't you?"

"Yes," I answered, encouragingly, "I do; and there isn't a finer girl between the Oscilla and Suwannee rivers,—but go on with your story."

"Well, ever since that night me and Sallie danced together so much, down to old Miss Tuten's quiltin' frolic, some how or nother I've had the alfiredest, onaccountablest feelins for her I ever had for anything in all my life. Next mornin',

when we all broke up, I bid Sallie goodbye and went home, thinkin I'd lie down and take a chunk of a nap till dinner time, then go out and help the old man finish diggin' the tater patch, beyant the cowpen. I done so; that is, I lay down, but darn the bit could I sleep. Every time I shet my eyes, somehow or nuther I could see Sallie just as plain as daylight! yes, there she was hoppin' and skippin' around the floor as nat'ral as could be, and, to save me, I couldn't keep from openin' my eyes to see if she warn't there sure enough. Well, I kept on that way, shettin' my eyes to go to sleep and openin' them agin to see Sallie, till dinner come on, and I had to get up at last without sleepin' a dinged wink. Arter dinner, knowin' it warn't wuth while to go to bed agin, I tuck a hoe and goes out to where the old man was extractin' his big nigger-killers and pitched in, and that's the last I knowed till, about two hours afterwards, the old man bawled out: 'I say, Math, what the deuce ails you? I never seed you work so hard afore, in all my born days!' Well, I sorter hauled in my horns and looked round, and, would you believe it? I had been a digging about two rows to the old man's one, all the evenin'! and kin tell you wot, the old Jock's right hard to head at diggin' taters when he's a mind to hump shoulders to it; and I don't think he lost any time on this occasion, for, when I looked at him, the sweat was just pourin' down his jaws like rain off the eaves of a house. Why, thinks I, wot the dang-

nation does this mean? it can't be the thoughts of that 'ere Sallie, that makes me take on so! 'Oh no, Math,' says I, 'you're a leetle too smart for that,—'taint every gal with blue eyes and red lips that kin keep you awake three days and nights, without she keeps your peepers purty well sprinkled with curryann pepper.' But I couldn't get them onaccountable feelins to cool down, so I made tracks fur the house, thinkin' I mought git to sleep with the help of some of marm's yarb tea.

Arter rollin' and tumblin' about till midnight, sleep overcome natur' and I begun to saw gourds. Next night it was the same thing over agin, and it kept on being the same thing till, at last, I was obliged to come to the conclusion, that I was—ahem! Well, the fact is I was in love with Sallie, and I couldn't help it. When I finds this to be the state of the case, you may know I warn't long in concludin' wot was next to be done.

When Sunday comes round, I put on my fix-ups and goes saunterin' along to old Dykes', bent on havin' a little soft talk along with Sallie on marryin' matters. Well, when I come in sight of the old Squire's home, I begun to feel, somehow or nuther, kinder alloverish—I couldn't draw breath fast enough; my heart went pitty patty, pitty patty, agin my ribs like the very nation, and I had to stop every now and then to ketch a long breath. 'Cause, you see, this was the first time I had ever started out a courtin' in my life, and I

was darned nigh scared to deth. Arter a long time, howsomever, I twisted up my courage to a stickin' p'int, and walked in. The old lady gin me a chear, and arter I'd menshuned somethin' 'bout the fine wether, (forgettin' it looked like it was gwine to rain every minit,) I tuck a good look at Sallie; and, by the everlastin' gracious! I tho't she was the purtiest thing I ever seed in my whole life! for a little bit, I swan, I felt like I wanted to eat her up. When I had nussed the little pot-sutted kitten, and patted the 'puss' on the head awhile, the old lady she went out to the kitchen, and I begun to kinder sidle up to Sallie. Well, long afore dinner time, me and her was in purty close quarters, as lovin' as two turtle doves. Things went on fustrate for three or four Sundays, then I seed the old man begin to look at me kinder sideways, and over his spectacles, like as though he didn't much relish the turn things was a takin'; but I didn't pay much 'tention to the old feller, till last Sunday week. When I went over that mornin' arter brekfust, as usual, the fust thing old Dykes done, was to give me a little kind of a hint to stay at home on Sundays, for the future."

"He gave you a hint, Math!" said I, "what did the old scamp say to you?"

"Why, by jingo, he jest told me 'if ever he cotched me back inside of his yard agin, he'd beat me till my own daddy wouldn't know me;' and that warn't all, for he tuck me by the kote

koller and led me out to the gate, and sed he, 'now go! make yourself skarce in dubble quick time!' and I couldn't do any better, under the sarcumstances, than to take the old man's advice."

"Well," continued Math, after a pause, "that's about the end of the matter. Me and Sallie is promised to be married, but her blasted, old no-corn-makin' daddy won't let me come in half a mile of her, *if he knows it;* but (with a wink) you see, he *don't know* everything, nor half as much as he thinks he does. I can't make up my mind hardly what to do next; but betwixt you and me and the stump, I'm gwine to have her somehow or nuther, certin!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

SILE'S STORY CONTINUED.

It was a cold, stormy night. The wind blew "great guns" from the north east, and the rain dashed in fitful torrents against my windows with such force as to produce a deafening noise. I sat over a warm fire, resting my feet upon the low mantelpiece, watching the smoke from an old-fashioned Dutch pipe, as it gracefully curled and wreathed into innumerable fantastical figures and slowly disappeared above my head, and was just

thinking about retiring to make myself comfortable for the night, when a loud knock at the door startled me.

"Who's there?" I asked.

"A friend," answered a voice outside.

"Well, if you are a friend, come in; for I presume you don't find it very comfortable standing there in the rain!"

The door opened, and in walked Math, shivering with cold, and as wet as a drowned rat.

"Thunder and turf!" exclaimed I, "what in the name of common sense started you out at this late hour, and such a night, too! Didn't the wind almost blow you away?"

"Hold on, Major, hold on awhile; I've come over to see you on a little particular business, but you must give me time to thaw fust! I swow, I never seed sich weather as this in the Flurridy's afore, these ten years!"

He took a seat near the fire, and sat for some time in a brown study—neither spoke nor moved. I saw, in a very few minutes he had met with some reverse of fortune that was operating powerfully upon his mind. For the space of fifteen minutes, perhaps, I suffered him to remain uninterrupted in the enjoyment of his cogitations; but, beginning at last to feel some anxiety with regard to the oddity of his appearance, I asked him to explain the nature of his business at this unseasonable hour of the night.

"Well, Major," said he, after coughing and

clearing up his throat some half dozen times or more, "I'm in a thunderin' scrape, and as you are the only man in all these yere parts that's ever seemed like they wanted to befriend me in enny way, I've come to see if you woldn't help me out?"

"Very well, Math," said I, "tell me the nature of your difficulty, and if I can do any thing, you know, without asking, I am ready to go any reasonable length to serve you."

"Thank you, Major, thank you a thousand times for that. If you ever stand in need of a friend, old fellow," continued he, "jest call on Mathy Dawson, and dang my everlastin' buttons if he don't swim a river of moccasin snakes for yer any time!"

"Very well," I answered; "we'll see about that part of the matter some other time, but tell me, first, what it is you want me to do for you?"

"Well, you know that night we went over Alligator Creek a fire-huntin', I was tellin' you about mine and Sallie Dykes' little scrape? Well, some of them matters has taken a considerable turn for the worst. I went over t'other day, like a gentleman, and axed the old man for his darter, and, instead of givin' me a perlite answer, the old willain got right up, tuck his big walkin cane, and druv me off the place. Sallie sends me word today, by her cousin Charlie, that they are fixin' to send her away down inter Warkuller county, out of my reach, and, if I want her, I'd better fix

some plan to steal her afore day arter to-morrow night, for then's when they're gwine to start with her. Charlie tells me the whole family is treatin' of her the very worst kind, and doin' everything they kin to aggrywate and bedevil her. Now, Major, I can't stand the like of that, and I'm comin' to what I want you to do for me.

"There's to be a big quiltin' to-morrow down to ole man Shuffield's, and all Dykes' folks is to be there, and, as I can get no chance to see Sallie myself, I want you, if you please, to go down there and try yer best to make some kinder 'rangement with her to meet you somewhere, and somehow, to-morrow night. Will you do it, Major?',

After some little useless remonstrance with him as to the propriety of going into measures so rashly, I consented to assist him.

"Then you'll go, and no mistake?" inquired he.

"Yes, I'll go, Math, but you must promise to keep dark about the matter, for, upon the whole, it's rather an ugly affair, and I shouldn't much like any one to know I have a hand in it."

"I'll keep as dark as thunder," was the reply.

Agreeably to promise, I went next day to the quilting and endeavored to make some arrangement with Sallie, but owing to the strict watch kept over all her movements, I could get no opportunity of doing so until very late in the afternoon; and even then it was quite brief, as I only had time to whisper in her ear these words—"Sallie, meet me at midnight behind the horse-lot," and

she to answer by a nod of the head, when she was discovered in rather dangerous proximity to me and called away by her mother.

Having accomplished the object of my uninvited presence at the quilting, I immediately returned home, where I found Math waiting for me in the most lamentable state of suspense.

When I informed him of my success in having made a satisfactory arrangement with Sallie for the elopement, I almost feared the fellow would go beside himself with pure delight. He talked, he sang, he danced, he wondered if midnight would ever come, and occasionally swore that, "Ef it jest warn't for the respect his daddy teached him to hev for old age, he could lick forty ole Dykes, and as many of his sons as could be crammed into a ten acre field."

At last the old clock over the mantelpiece told the hour of eleven, and we began to make preparations to depart; for it was full two miles to the anticipated scene of action, and, of course, we had no time to lose. Stealthily we crept out to the lot and bridled up old Dan.

Now, Dan was of the long-eared tribe, and, independent of his natural mulishness, he also had the credit of other peculiarities, one of which, and perhaps the most important, was his extreme laziness. He had one gait, one only—that was a short, shuffling pace; nor could he, by any manner of means, even under the most urgent circumstances, be induced to exchange it for a faster.

Thunder, brickbats, cowhides, dragoon-spurs, and sharp sticks, all lost their efficacy upon Dan; but he was the only chance, and we were obliged to take him.

In the darkness and hurry, we were unable to find a saddle, and had to substitute a long double cushion from an old buggy. This reached nearly to the ground on either side of the imperturbable Dan. Thus rigged, we mounted—I first, Math behind me—and toddled off in the road leading to old Dykes'.

In the course of half an hour so or, we drew about opposite old Dykes' house, which was situated some two hundred yards from the road, and, after spending a few minutes in council, took Dan into a pine thicket, made him fast to one of the young saplings and there left him, and proceeded to the place of meeting agreed upon at the quilting.

Esconcing ourselves each in a corner of the horse-lot fence, in such a position that we could observe any movement that might take place about the house without attracting notice, we quietly awaited the result of our expedition.

To our great gratification, we had not long to wait before we saw Sallie come to the door, bearing a small bundle under her arm, take a cautious survey around her, then hurriedly set off precisely in the direction where we were sitting. As soon as she had approached sufficiently near, I arose and met her.

"Well, Sallie," said I, "we are here, you see, all ready for you, and I am glad to say you kept us shivering in the cold here but a short time."

"I was mighty afraid I would not find you," said she, "but where is Math?"

"Here he is!" exclaimed a voice from an adjacent corner of the fence, and in the next moment Math's brawny arms were locked around Sallie's waist. I couldn't see, but verily, several loud concussions followed, which very much reminded me of the old fashioned buss.

"Come, good folks, we have no time for kissing and hugging now," said I, "you must defer that to a more convenient season."

We then started with all possible speed for Dan, Math supporting Sallie on one side and I on the other; but scarcely had we proceeded fifty yards, ere we heard Sallie's name loudly and frequently vociferated by several members of the family.

"Your horses, boys, your horses! quick! quick! or she's gone!" shouted the old man. We heard no more till we were lifting Sallie upon Dan's back, when the sound of horses' hoofs greeted our ears. Louder and louder grew the sound as it approached us.

"O, we are done for!" cried Math, "they'll find us—they've found us already! but, Sallie," continued he, turning to her, "darn my skin, if they git you away from me this night, if they ain't got to drag you over my dead body, cert'in as lightnin'!"

"Hush! Math," said I, "keep quiet; we are not discovered yet, and we are not agoing to be; for when they come to the road, as a matter of course, they'll take that, and never think of crossing over to look for us here."

Now, another little peculiarity in the character of Dan, not mentioned with the first, was his inordinate fondness for the company of horses, and on this occasion he expressed it in such a manner as very nearly to betray us, and utterly overthrow all our designs.

On came the two horsemen—who afterwards proved to be Sallie's brothers—and when they dashed up to the road, suddenly checked their steeds, as if in doubt which end to take. Just at this critical moment, an honest desire, no doubt, seizing Dan to salute them, he opened his throat and sent forth a bray, that sounded to me, as it rang through the surrounding forest, six times louder than the whistle of a steamship. Quick as thought the young Dykes's turned their horses' heads for us, and came with all the speed the darkness of the night would admit of.

"Heavens and yearth!" exclaimed Math, as the last sound of Dan's stentorian voice was floating away in the distance. "They'll have us! they've got us! O Jerusalem! Sallie, they'll git you away from me arter all! Oh! Major—"

"Hold your tongue, fool! they may miss us yet," said I, and I seized the mule by the nose to prevent, if possible, a repetition of the bray. Suc-

ceeding at last, by combining force with persuasion, in restoring Dan to quietness, we remained perfectly still, awaiting any new turn matters might take.

On came the horsemen exactly in our direction, and, but for exceedingly good fortune on our side, they would have ridden slap up to us. When within a half dozen yards or so, they stopped to listen.

"Where was that bray?" asked Green Dykes of Homer.

"We must be about the spot," returned Homer.

"What's that?" said Green, "I hear a noise—listen!"

Just as we were about to give up in despair, they turned their horses' heads, attracted by the noise of some animal we had frightened from his lair, running through the bushes, put whip and left us very considerably relieved.

We then mounted as quickly as possible—I before, Sallie next, and Math behind—and set off in the direction opposite to that taken by the brothers, and soon reached a place of safety.

My story is now done; and I will not task your patience further than to say that, a very few days afterwards, Math Dawson and Sallie Dykes were made one flesh, and, for aught I know to the contrary, they are still realizing all the blissful enjoyments incident to the connubial state.

CHAPTER XIX.

MANY were the long, and, possibly, interesting stories, related at different times by different members of our company, that might be recorded in this history; but, as they would swell our "Scenes" into undue proportion, and probably tire the kind reader, I forbear, after having given one single example of the manner in which the monotonous midnight hours were metamorphosed into pleasant pastime on these occasions of sitting up to take the magnetic variation of the needle. A few other adventures I have to relate in a few more chapters, and then nothing remains but to take an affectionate leave of the reader who has condescendingly followed us through our varied scenes of pleasure and trouble.

We all participated to some extent, and very naturally, in that disposition to play tricks upon each other—of which we had so effectually broken Ralf by getting him into the "Mollie scrape"—and frequently exercised it, but only to a reasonable length. One or two of these tricks, fastidiously termed "practical jokes," I design to relate in this chapter.

It happened that old Bet, one of the ponies, with whose name the reader has already become familiar, had a most inordinate propensity to sleep

with the rest of us, immediately about the fire, and never failed to gratify it when left free to exercise her own pleasure in the matter. This curious disposition on the part of Bet, was especially terrifying to Sile, who dreaded the result of being trodden upon more than the spilling of *hot fat* over one of his limbs; and he never ventured to close his eyes for sleep until she was securely fastened to a neighboring sapling, except when it was necessary, as was frequently the case, for her to be turned loose to graze, and then he did so with much fear and trembling.

It not unfrequently occurred (and not a very pleasant occurrence to any of us) that, on awakening in the night from a slight dig about the region of the short ribs, we would find the old lady quietly stepping over us, looking for a good place to lie down; or, feeling a heavy pressure against our sides or back, we awoke to find her our close bed-fellow, with as much nonchalance as one having a perfect and undeniable right to half of each of our blankets.

On one occasion, when Bet had to be turned loose to graze, Sile took her before dark to a fine grazing place, some two hundred yards from the camp, with the hope she would remain until she filled herself, and would then lie down and rest till morning without returning to the camp. This, doubtless, she would have done if left to herself, but Ralf and I, seeing Sile so fearful of Bet, determined to make some fun out of it. When he

had got into a sound sleep, we went and led Bet back to the camp, and, while Sile slept, made her step her forefeet over him, and leaving her there, retired to our blankets, from where, with a long stick provided for the purpose, we poked him in the ribs until he awoke. On opening his eyes, the first thing that met his gaze was the pony standing right across his body. Making one spring, in another instant he was standing some ten feet distant, debating with himself whether or no he should break her head with a lightwood knot; but after giving audible vent to sundry non-recordable execrations against the old pony, he quietly led her to a sapling near by and tied her fast, informing her, in the meantime, in tones loud enough for us to hear, that "if she had no more sense than to be trampling over people while they were asleep, by thunder, she should remain tied if she starved!"

Not altogether satisfied with the success of our trick, Ralf and I resolved to have it over again. Sile, now that Bet was tied, felt secure, and was soon sound asleep again. As soon as we were satisfied of this fact, Ralf got down on his hands and knees, some eight or ten feet from where our victim lay, and commenced a series of heavy springs, trying to make sufficient noise to arouse him, if possible, to a half conscious state. About the time Ralf got to Sile, I commenced hallooing whoa! whoa! in a very loud voice, and the very instant Sile began to exhibit signs of waking,

Ralf lit on his stomach with hands and knees. Sile thinking, of course, it was old Bet, ejaculated, "W-w-w-wo—whoa, Bet!" at the same time throwing his long legs upward and over toward his head, turning a couple of complete hoop somersets to get out of the way, and did not stop then, but ran some six yards further on his hands and knees.

On hearing the outbursts of laughter which followed this ridiculous exhibition of his agility, Sile rose to his feet, and taking a survey of objects around, was not long in arriving at a clear comprehension of the true nature of the case. On doing so, he placed both hands deep in his pockets, and as he walked leisurely back to the fire, with the palor still lingering about his cheeks, he said, "Well, gentlemen, it's a confoundedly mean and dirty trick; I don't care who of you were engaged in it."

Sile slept but little more during that night, through sheer fear that we would again run the old pony afoul of him.

About the time of the taking place of events above recorded, we completed all of our work save two townships which lay farther to the westward, and of the quality of which we knew nothing. All hands were anxious to get through, and with every mile done we became more and more so. The only obstacle now to an early completion of the work, was that our supplies had about given out, and it would be necessary for our impoverished team to make another trip, either to

Fort Capron or Tampa, for enough to take us through.

We got everything in readiness to move in the direction of our last township. Before reaching the centre of the first, where the Captain designed to establish his encampment while subdividing it, we met with a formidable obstacle in the shape of a deep creek, which appeared to be impassable on account of its depth and width. The Captain, therefore, ordered the tent to be pitched here until we could ascertain whether there was any fording place where we might cross the team. Soon after we had taken dinner, and while preparing to explore the creek for some distance up and down in search of a ford, we were astonished by a voice hailing us from the opposite side of the creek in good English:

"Halloo! Whose camp is that?"

All eyes were immediately turned to the point from whence came the sound, and we beheld a man on horseback, who, though he did not at the time impress us very favorably with that idea, from his dingy, camp-life appearance, turned out to be a real, civilized white man—an article some of us had not had the pleasure of seeing for months.

"Who are you?" asked the Captain, after eyeing him rather suspiciously for a few moments.

"Don't you know me?" came from the other side of the creek.

"I may have known you at some former time,"

answered the Captain, "but in your present plight, I can't say I recognise you."

"Well," said the man, "I am D——, a neighboring Surveyor. My work lies some miles west of this, and I have come purposely to pay you a visit."

Of course, D. was at once recognised, and the Captain expressed himself as being much gratified by a visit from him.

D. expressed a desire to compare compasses with the Captain, and the latter set all hands to work constructing a raft, upon which his compass might be taken over safely.

When the raft was completed, it was found to be of such heavy, sobby material that it lacked sufficient buoyancy to bear up the weight of a man; but rather than wait for another to be made of better material, which was hard to get, the Captain resolved to make an attempt to cross on the one on hand. With this view he tied the compass to his shoulders, supplied himself with a long pole, and taking his position in the centre of the raft shoved off.

The frail bark immediately began to sink, but when the Captain set his pole and bore down on it as a propelling power, much of his weight was transferred from the raft to the pole, and the former again rose to the surface. The moment he began to raise the pole for a new set the raft would disappear, and by the time the set was taken the Captain was up to his armpits in water. In

this manner, after a tedious and ticklish voyage, he reached the opposite shore in safety.

Soon after this Tap and Sile discovered a safe fording place a short distance up the creek, when we crossed our team over, and spent a pleasant afternoon and night with D. and his men.

Next morning our visitors left us to return to their work, and we pushed on for the middle of our township, for the purpose, as already stated, of establishing a permanent camp.

I will state, in this connection, that during this day, before reaching our destination, we discovered a wild horse feeding in the edge of a small pond, almost entirely surrounded by a thick hammock. We attempted to catch him by hemming him between the pond and hammock; but, when he found he was getting into a close place, he backed his ears and came at Tap and myself, who stood between him and the open woods, with such fierceness, that we were obliged to get out of the way and let him pass. He was, in all probability, an estray from some party of Indians. We hunted for him afterwards, but as we could never even see any sign of him, we must have given him such a fright that he thought proper to change his locality altogether.

CHAPTER XX.

As soon as we had located the new camp in the last township but one, it became necessary to start the team for a new supply of rations.

It being the Captain's wish that I should undertake the trip, I accordingly made all necessary preparation and started. It was a long road, or rather a long route, for there was no road—nothing but a dim trail that had been beaten years before by hunting parties of Indians. It was now so nearly overgrown with grass, that none but a practiced woodsman could have followed its windings. A portion of the route also lay through the woods, without even a semi-obliterated pathway to mark the way. We supposed the distance to Tampa to be about seventy-five miles, and I calculated to be absent seven days.

To enter into a minute description of the country through which I passed, and of the feeling of loneliness which oppressed me traveling alone in those wild woods, would only be an uninteresting repetition of what has already been said on the same subject. Suffice it, that the loneliness was not at all curtailed by a knowledge of the fact, that I was traveling almost entirely unprotected through a favourite hunting district of the Seminole Indians, and by recent demonstrations, such as stealing arti-

cles from our camp, burning woods in every direction, and others, that they entertained hostile feelings towards the whites, and only waited a good opportunity to raise the war-whoop, and exhume the long buried war hatchet.

In all our tramps, although we were in the midst of their favorite hunting grounds, and frequently heard the report of their fire arms, and almost daily saw their sign, we had not been able to see one of them.

On the second day after leaving camp, about ten o'clock, I accidentally met with a small band of them, under the following circumstances:

About an hour after coming into the old road, made some fifteen years previously, during the war with the Indians, by the transportation of troops and supplies from Fort Melon to Tampa, and which was now almost as hard to follow as the trail I had taken from the camp, I came to a thick swampy place through which the road passed. The ground being soft, the wagon made little or no noise, and on driving out into the open woods on the opposite side, I found myself in the presence of a party of about twenty Indians, of different ages and sexes, all seated against trees, resting themselves.

At my sudden and unexpected appearance among them, they were probably as much surprised as myself, but evidently not half so badly scared.

Knowing they had not the slightest affinity for

a white man, and that I was almost completely in their power, my first impulse (I am dangerous *when alarmed*) was to take up the double barrelled gun, which lay at my side in the wagon, fire into the crowd, and then trust to my heels and the thick undergrowth of the swamp for the balance. A single moment's reflection, however, taught me the ridiculousness, and probably disastrous result of such a course, and I determined to pursue a different one.

The Indians, on seeing me emerge from the swamp, quickly rose from their seats and stared at me, with that peculiar sort of wild stare which can only be exhibited on an Indian's countenance, expressive of indetermination whether they should run into the swamp, or remain where they were. They did the latter, and I drove boldly up into the midst of them, and stopping the ponies, alighted from the wagon and offered my hand to the nearest, a middle aged man, who appeared to be the chief of the party, which to my great relief he very readily accepted. I then went round and shook hands with the whole party, expressing to each a *very affectionate* "howdy," which was returned by as many as could utter the word in broken English.

"Which way from?" asked the tall individual with whom I had first shaken hands, when I had got through with the rest.

"From the woods," I answered, pointing in

the direction of our camp. "I belong to a party of surveyors, about thirty miles from here."

"Oh! yes," said he, "measure ground, blaze tree; me see you."

"When did you see us?" I asked.

"Oh! one, two, *free*—heap time."

"Well, why did you not come up and talk to us? We would have been glad to see you."

"White man no like Ingin—Ingin 'fraid white man—no like come to see um."

"You are mistaken," I answered. "White people like good friendly Indians as much as any body, and if you had come to our camp we would have been glad to see you, and treated you like white people."

Having a large jug suspended from his waist by a belt passed through the handle, I had the curiosity to inquire what it contained. Mistaking my question, (he thought I asked him for a drink,) and turning the jug up-side down to satisfy me there was nothing in it, said, "All gone, done drink all up, get more at Tampa."

After conversing for some time in a friendly manner with this son of the forest, and one or two others of the party who could speak a little English, I learned that they had been on a hunt for several weeks, and, having collected a large number of skins, were now making their way to Tampa to exchange them for powder, ball, and whiskey.

When I discovered we were all bound for the

same destination, I invited them to accompany me, proffering to take the squaws and papooses with me in the wagon, but they respectfully declined, for the reason, as they said, that they wished to stop on the road occasionally and hunt, in order to procure as many skins as possible, and would probably not reach Tampa for some days to come.

I happened to have a good supply of Tobacco with me, and offered a small piece to each of the elder of the party, which they were delighted to receive. I soon shook hands all around again, bidding them "good-bye," and we separated excellent friends.

After leaving the redskins, I continued my route through a low, level, barren, monotonous country, the entire day, without finding a drop of water with which to quench the thirst of either myself or the ponies, which, toward the afternoon, was very great, and increasing at every moment.

Almost entirely overcome by the excessive heat and want of water, I greatly feared the ponies would not be able to hold out many hours longer, but I pressed them forward as fast as they could bear, which was only a slow walk, stopping only long enough to search in the low and bushy places near the road, where there appeared the least probability of procuring water. Dark came, and still no water, but, with the hope of soon coming to a creek or pond, I did not stop. About eleven o'clock at night I had the satisfaction of coming

to a creek, the glimmering of whose waters, by the faint starlight, was a glorious sight to a famishing man. As I thought the ponies were suffering more than myself, I concluded to drive in and let them drink, and drive out on the other side before supplying myself. I drove in and stopped, but was very much surprised that on tasting the water the ponies refused to drink. After waiting a reasonable time I started them forward, and was very soon alarmed at the rapidly increasing depth of the water. The thought had never occurred to me that the creek was too deep to ford, until now it was too late to do otherwise. When the water came up to the backs of the ponies, and to my knees, standing in the wagon, I stopped to see if there was no way to get out the same way I had come in. Unfortunately there was none. On the right were brush and bushes—on the left the same. As well as I could see in the darkness, I had only got about one-third of the distance across. After some moments consideration of the matter, I resolved to go ahead and risk the consequences. I did so, and much to my gratification found I was then in the deepest part of the creek.

Driving fairly out of the water, I got out a tin cup, and hastened to quench my thirst from the creek; but imagine my feelings if you can, dear reader, when, on dipping up a cupful of water and applying it to my parched lips, I found it as salt as brine. It was tide-water from the Gulf. Jaded and worn down as the ponies were, it was

preposterous to think of going farther, and I ungeared and fed them, but of course they ate but little. I spread my blanket on the grass and lay down, without so much as kindling a fire, but not to sleep; I tossed from side to side the entire night, with a scorching fever.

On rising in the morning—will the reader believe it?—I discovered, not twenty feet from where I had lain, a spring of excellent water. It is useless to say more than that I drank enough to keep me in misery the whole day. I went on my way rejoicing, reached Tampa, and returned to camp without meeting with any other adventure worthy of note.

CHAPTER XXI.

After an eight days' trip through a rough country, and the last four with a heavy load, and a team already jaded down and half eaten by flies and mosquetoes, it may very easily be inferred that I was in a pretty badly used-up condition when I reached the camp; so much so, indeed, that on the morning after my arrival the ponies were scarcely able to move.

This, however, so far as the progress of the work was concerned, was no very serious difficulty, as we could do again what we had often done before when the team was absent—each man serve as his

own pack horse, for the transportation of provisions from one point to another, for his own consumption.

This we designed to do until our ponies should have time to recuperate, but a circumstance took place which, as the printer would say, knocked us all into pi, and caused us to abandon the work and seek protection from the now hostile Seminoles, either by flight or otherwise.

While quietly pursuing our work, with the buoyant hope of its speedy completion, one afternoon, not many days after my return from Tampa, we were no less surprised than gratified to discover a man on horseback, coming towards us, following the old Indian trail I had traveled to Tampa. Just at that time we had stopped to set a mile post, mark the bearing trees, &c. The stranger, not noticing our surveying implements, and not quite certain that we were surveyors, when within about a hundred yards reined up his horse as if in doubt what to make of us. Observing this, the Captain shouted to him to "come ahead—that we were white men when washed clean, and he shouldn't be hurt." Thus assured the stranger approached without hesitancy, and on coming up the Captain recognized a Mr. Turner, an old acquaintance, whom he had not seen for some years.

After the usual greetings had been passed, the Captain asked:

"Well, Turner, what in the world brought you here; are you lost?"

"Not lost," answered Turner, "but the bearer of important news."

"What is that?" inquired the Captain.

"I am come on an express," replied Turner, "by order of the Commandant at Tampa, to inform you that the Indians have broken out, and warn you to leave at once for some place of safety, as, unless you do, you will probably be attacked within the next twenty-four hours. The Indians are now scouring the country in every direction, threatening death to all who may fall into their hands, and, if you are not prepared to fall into a good fight, I would advise you to leave without a moment's delay."

Of course we were thunderstruck at the intelligence, and for a moment some of us not a little frightened.

In the present broken down condition of our team, it was impossible to leave without throwing away all our plunder, which not one of us felt inclined to do.

After some further conversation with Turner, we learned that, a day or two before, Lieut. Hartsuff and his command were attacked near Fort Simon Drum, (some twenty-five miles from where we were,) four of his men killed and himself wounded, besides the destruction of thirteen mules and several wagons. The circumstances of the attack were briefly as follows:

This gentleman was sent, with a small command, to survey a road across a certain swamp

lying within the Indian boundary, for the purpose of establishing a communication between one military post and another. Billy Bowlegs (the chief) hearing of it, repaired to the spot and ordered him to desist, telling him that he was making a survey in his territory, which he would not allow, and that if he progressed with it beyond a certain point he would be fired upon. Acting under the order of a superior, Lieut. Hartsuff bravely continued his work, and the threat of Billy was put into execution, with the result already detailed.

The first blow thus struck, and knowing the character of the Seminoles, and their deep-seated hatred of the whites, it was not difficult for us to divine that we were in imminent danger, and that something must be done at once, as they well knew our location, and would probably attack us next.

Turner soon left us, to hunt up and bear the same news he had brought to us to other parties of surveyors then in the woods; first informing us—when we told him the condition of our team—that if we could tough it out for six or eight days, at the end of that time there would be some government teams passing that way, en route for Fort Capron, and that we might put our things on board of them, and go with them to that place.

"But," continued Turner, "if you remain here, remember it is not with my advice to do so. I merely make this suggestion, that, with all the

facts before you, you may be able to come to whatever conclusion you may think best." With this he bade us good-bye, and mounting his horse, was soon out of sight.

After a long and earnest consultation, the Captain concluded it would be best to risk the consequences, and wait for the Government teams—all hands expressing a preference for this course. We, therefore, immediately repaired to our camp, about a mile distant, near the banks of the Kissimmee river, and began to make vigorous preparations for a vigorous defence in case we should be attacked.

The first thing done was to move our effects from the edge of the thick woods some two hundred yards out into the open prairie, where we could see all around, and thus prevent a surprise by the Indians, who might spring suddenly upon us from the neighboring bushes and overpower us before we could have time to use our arms, and then went immediately to work with the view of building some sort of breastwork, behind which we might fight to advantage.

Good heavy poles were cut and carried on our shoulders from the woods to the spot selected in the prairie for the battle-ground, out of which we constructed a pen about ten feet square, and about as high as a man's shoulder, notching them down carefully, until they rested snugly one upon another, all the way along from corner to corner. This done, we dug a ditch on every side, throw-

ing the dirt against the walls to fill up the small cracks, and strengthen them as much as possible.

All this work was performed in an incredibly short time, as at dark it was completed, and we were all inside of the novel garrison awaiting whatever event might take place.

"Now, my hearties," said the Captain, as we sat down for a moment's rest after the excessive labor of the afternoon, "you must remember, should we be attacked by the Indians, that there is no place to run to; that the lives of us all depend, to some extent, on the bravery of each and every one, and there must be no backing out. With this kind of feeling, and with the advantages we possess, we can beat off three times our number of the redskins."

Every man expressed a willingness to bear an equal part when it came to fighting, and I verily believe there were those in that little log pen who would have been gratified with a certainty that the Indians would fall upon us, provided they would take daylight for it.

Our ardor was very much cooled, however, when, on examination, we found there but nine percussion caps in the camp, and our guns (three in number) were all arranged for shooting with caps. As it was evident we could not shoot many times, the axes, the jacob's staff, a number of sticks of hard wood keenly pointed to be used as spears, and several murderous looking clubs, were

conveniently placed in the enclosure, to be used in case of emergency.

Next, three guards, consisting of two men each, were appointed to relieve each other, and keep a strict watch for the enemy while the rest slept.

The night passed off quietly, without any noise or other signs to induce us to believe that there were Indians prowling about in the neighborhood.

The next day, our thoughts having nothing else to operate upon while cooped up in the narrow confines of our little fort—if it may be dignified with that name—they very naturally, under the circumstances, ran upon the subject of the Indians, their history, character, habits of life, &c. &c. One of the party related the following brief history of them in Florida, which is inserted here with the belief that it may not be without some interest to the reader:

"The word Seminole is from the Creek, signifying *refugee*. If we are to credit tradition, the Cherokee tribe, or a portion of it, declared war against a neighboring tribe, while another portion, not thinking, perhaps, the cause for war sufficient or justifiable, refused to take up the war club against their neighbors. Thus arose two parties, one opposed to, and the other in favor of a war. Those opposed to the war being in the minority, were subjected to much annoyance and many indignities from the more powerful party, to elude which they fled for protection to

the swamps of Florida; hence the origin of the tribe and of their name—Seminole, or *refugee*.

"At what precise period, or what number fled to the 'Land of Flowers,' I have never been able correctly to ascertain. Their number has never been accurately known at any time, but at the commencement of their war against the whites in 1835–6, it was supposed there were several thousand warriors.

"The war upon the whites, beginning about the above date, lasted for several years, resulting in the loss of many lives, a vast amount of property to the citizens of the State, and several millions of dollars to the general government. After this a peace was concluded, and many of the Indians induced to take up their abode west of the Mississippi river. This treaty of peace, by which the territory in which they now live was assigned them, certain privileges granted, &c., remained inviolate until the summer of 1849, when a small party, consisting of four, made an attack upon two or three families living at old Fort Capron, on Indian River, which resulted in the death of a Mr. Barker, and the loss of an arm to Maj. William Russell, their families escaping to the opposite side of the river, after incredible suffering for the want of water and food, and exposure to the inclemencies of the weather, and ultimately to the settlements above. A demand was immediately sent to the chief of the tribe for those concerned in the outbreak, which was readily com-

plied with, and three of them (the fourth being killed in his resistance to those who went to take them) were delivered up to be dealt with according to the dictates of the authorities. They were put in prison to await trial, but soon after committed suicide.

"From that time no difficulty of consequence occurred, if we may except a few harmless quarrels between them and the frontier settlers, growing out of the cattle-thieving propensities which were indulged in, until now Hartsuff and his men are attacked, and several of them are killed.

"The number of the Seminole Indians at present is supposed not to exceed four hundred and fifty, and variously estimated by different persons even at a less figure. The question is frequently and gravely asked, why are they not at once eradicated from the country, and its citizens freed from the ceaseless annoyances to which they are ever subject from them. This, we admit, is a perfectly natural question from one who knows nothing of the country they occupy, nor of their habits of living. But if such person could take a trip, commencing at Charlotte's Harbor, or a little south of that point, eastward along the south side of the Lake Okeechobee to Fort Jupiter inlet, the mystery would be at once explained. Who has not heard of the Everglades, a mighty swamp, stretching from Gulf to Atlantic, from Lake Okeechobee almost to Key West, embracing an area of about forty-five hundred miles, and by the side

of which the celebrated Okeefanokee would stand like a mole-hill beside a mountain? This is the home of the Seminole. He knows every foot of it; the white man knows nothing. This large territory is constantly covered with water, but interspersed with islands, containing from five to several hundred, or even thousand acres of fertile land. From one of these islands to another the Seminole meanders his little log canoe, made for the purpose, and upon them has his banana, pine-apple, corn and pumpkin patches, far out of reach of the white man's rifle.

"It will be seen, by a moment's reflection, that, under such circumstances, it is next to impossible to capture these Indians, unless they are caught out on some of their marauding expeditions, which is rendered an extremely uncertain business, from the fact that long chains of swamp and hammock stretch out from this large swamp into the settlements, which usually furnish them cover for a sure retreat after committing a murder. It may be asked how these savages support themselves in this dismal swamp. And in its answer we discover one of the greatest advantages of the red man over the white. The Indians subsist entirely upon the co-ontee and bamboo roots, which they pound up and convert into bread, and upon deer, bear, turkeys, and fish, with all of which the swamp abounds. The utter impossibility of transporting provisions for an army through such a swamp, and the equal impossibility of an army

subsisting upon such articles as above enumerated, is the grand reason why the Indians have not long since been driven out.

"It has long been hoped that they might ultimately be induced to join their brethren in the West, who have gone before them, without the employment of 'Sharp's rifle' for that purpose, but this hope is now pretty generally given up. Even the kind hearted government has at last concluded that Bibles, tracts, and the olive branch, have lost their efficacy, and is now willing to try what virtue there is in powder and ball.

"Erratic in their dispositions, they wander from place to place, never remaining at one spot more than a few days at a time. When night comes, they stretch themselves upon the green grass, around a pine-knot fire, with the broad heavens for a covering in clear weather. If it rains, they erect low shelters of pine bark to protect their bodies from the beating element. They are idle, sulky, and doggish in their dispositions; never showing a spark of sociability with the whites in times of peace. Their dress consists of a hunting-shirt, reaching about midway of the thighs, fastened about the waist by means of a belt, a pair of buckskin leggings, and moccasins of the same material. Billy Bowlegs, the present chief, is now about forty-five years of age, and consequently in the prime of life. He possesses any amount of shrewd cunning, and is eminently qualified to carry on an Indian warfare."

On the following night, during the watch of Sile and myself, about the hour of midnight, Bull (our dog) began to sniffle the air, and exhibit signs of uneasiness, as if he smelt something he didn't much admire. Supposing it might be some animal prowling around trying to make out what we were, I did not at once think it necessary to disturb the slumbers of the Captain; but Bull becoming more and more excited, raising his bristles and alternately growling and whining, I concluded it would be prudent to have all hands awake and on the alert. I, therefore, noiselessly awoke the Captain, and all the others at the time asleep, who, with myself, thought the redskins must be about, and making ready for an onslaught. Each man immediately armed himself with a gun, club, stick, or whatever could be got hold of, and stood ready to repel invasion from any source whatever. Although we stood peering into the pitchy darkness, expecting every moment to see the dusky form of a savage creeping up to our breastwork to scale it, and be down upon us with tomahawk and butcher-knife, we had the satisfaction of seeing daylight approach without an attack.

To bore the reader with a rehearsal of the monotonous scenes which transpired during our sojourn on the banks of the Kissimmee would be superfluous, if not unkind, and I will therefore pass them over. Suffice it to say, that we were fortunate enough to escape an attack from the Indians, and that at the end of eleven days a gov-

erment team arrived on its way to Fort Capron, under an escort. As this team, contrary to our expectations, had already nearly a full load, it was impossible to get one-fifth of our things into it, and we had, at last, to leave many valuable articles in the woods to the mercy of the savages.

Among the valuables left, because there was no way for carrying them, were elaborate notes of "Scenes in a Surveyor's Life," which, doubtless, Billy Bowlegs afterwards perused with much pleasure. They were a loss to me, and a loss to those who have honored these scribblings with a perusal.

In addition to what of our plunder we could get into Uncle Sam's wagon, we packed as much on the ponies' backs as they could carry, which was a very small quantity, each of us also shouldering what we could carry, and started for Fort Capron.

The reader has already been informed that most of the distance between our work and Fort Capron lay through a low flat country, which now, by a succession of recent heavy rains, was almost entirely inundated. More than two-thirds of it was in this condition, and we were forced to wade for hours together in water from knee to waist deep. On this account several of the men were obliged to throw away their packs, as the muscles of their legs became almost paralyzed by the excessive labor of wading, and they were only

able to carry themselves by frequent tarrying to rest.

At the end of four days of such fatigue and suffering as I hope it may never be my lot to experience again, we reached Fort Capron, where we remained several days recuperating. Here the company was disbanded. One or two remaining to engage in business which offered, the balance of us seeking the first opportunity for sailing up Indian River, on the way to our respective homes, which, in due course of time, we reached, rejoicing to be once more among our friends, after an absence of months in the wild woods of South Florida.

By degrees we again became accustomed to the pleasures of civilized society.

The curtain now drops; the "Scenes" are closed. Nothing now remains but to "tip our beaver," accompanied with as polite a bow as one of our profession is capable of making, to those who have kindly followed us through, wishing them a hearty God speed in the paths of virtue and usefulness through life.

If we have been the humble means of enabling any to pass pleasantly a few leisure hours, or to take a real side-splitting laugh, our object has been fully accomplished.

Till we meet again, *adios*.