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EXPERIENCES OF A TOURIST ALONG THE INDIAN RIVER, FLORIDA.

A Visit to a Pineapple Plantation Followed by a Moonlight Boating Excursion—How to Catch Mulletts—Waves Aglow with Light.

(Copyright by American Press Association.)



IMAGINE several acres of light gray sand as level as a floor, and you have a Florida pineapple field. The product is not so easily pictured. The plant is like a cabbage in that it grows directly on the ground. The radical or root leaves spread out over the soil or reach upward at various angles. They are pale, bluish green in color, and thick, narrow, lance shaped and stiff. Each leaf terminates in a point, from which extends a spine as long, as sharp and as inflexible as a darning needle. In the center of the plant, on a short, thick, upright stem, is the fruit. This appears about eighteen months after the grove has been set out.

The young plants are put in rows with aisles between. They require little or no cultivation, except to keep out the weeds until the leaves cover the ground. A grove will bear for eight or ten years without re-planting. From 8,000 to 12,000 plants thrive on one acre. The most of the fruit matures in June. Plucking it is not a delight, for when the owner desires to gather his apples he clothes himself in a leather suit, dons thick leather gloves, and with a pair of shears or a long, sharp knife proceeds to business. The needles on the ends of the leaves cannot be defied otherwise. Each is a dagger.

To eat a perfectly ripe pineapple just from the parent stalk is to enjoy a new experience. The fruit is so delicate that it is sent to market when but half ripe. Hence its lovers in northern cities never taste the mature product.

The country along Indian river is fast becoming a great pineapple patch. The profits on the fruit have sometimes reached as high as \$1,000 per acre.

Indeed, Indian river is a region of never ending interest. The scenery is more like the tropics than elsewhere in the state, while it is intensely and characteristically Floridian. Beautiful orange groves, the immense live oaks, nowhere else so large



AMONG THE PINEAPPLES.

and spreading, clothed with waving moss, the plumelike palmetto, the clustering mangrove, the endless varieties of climbing, creeping vines, all are there. The banks for miles are bordered with cabbage palmettos, live oaks, oleananders (which there attain the size and height of fine trees and bloom throughout the winter), the Spanish bayonet, a sort of porcupine in the vegetable world, and the magnolia, a queen of the forest, whose beauty is a constant delight.

Bananas seem to grow without thought from any one. They appear to be simply a portion of the luxuriant life of the climate and soil gone to waste, a sort of overflow of nature's vitality taking to itself shape and form.

But one cannot be wholly absorbed in the products of the soil, for the inhabitants of the river will claim attention. Near what is called the Narrows one sails over a river bottom which is a great oyster bed. As I remarked the immense size of the shells at one point a native standing near drew forth:

"Thur hev bin shells picked up hereabouts, they tell me, that a human's foot could stan' into."

And indeed I could well believe it, provided the "human's" foot was small enough.

The river swarms with the finest of fish, among which the slim, silvery mullets, from nine inches to two feet in length, are the favorites. They often run in shoals a mile or more in extent, and from one-eighth to one-fourth of a mile in width. As they advance, with a noise not unlike that of a distant train of cars or a rising wind in a forest, their course is clearly in-



GATHERING ORANGES.

deated by the sudden leaping to the surface of individuals from the school. At frequent intervals, here, yonder, anywhere, there darts up to the air a gleaming, glittering body, making a vault of from one to three feet. Whether this is playfulness on the part of the joyous, white-sided mullets, or a sudden effort for more elbow room, or simply a "way" they have, I am not sufficient naturalist to decide.

As I watched them one day a lady in a group near by remarked that it was vainly and a desire to be noticed that caused them to leap.

"A cynical looking man near her replied "that it must be the female mullet that does the leaping."

Another male member of the party retorted, with a bow to the lady, "It certainly must be so if grace and beauty are to be reckoned as feminine."

"The mullet reserves its real parade for the moonlight. One glorious evening I was persuaded by an old expert to try a sail. I went to the wharf where the

boat lay. A "fat pine" torch blazed in the bow. As I arranged my seat and myself the "capt'n" carefully placed a thin board on each side of the light.

"What are you doing?" I asked. "Fixin' to keep the fish from puttin' out the torch," he replied.

"Fixing for what? and what fish?" I persisted.

"Why, the mullets. They'll begin to jump in here pretty soon, and if we don't have these guards they'll flop the blaze. It is light enough withouten a torch, but I want some fish for the hotel breakfast."

A fresh breeze soon carried us into mid-stream, and shortly afterward splashes were heard, now on our right, again on our left. I was watching some cloud of feet that were indescribably lovely when there came a flash, the sound of a fall, and a gleaming body dropped near my feet. A struggling fish over a foot long lay in the bottom of the boat. Before I had time for exclamatory remarks another voluntarily sprang in to keep it company. In a few minutes a third took passage with us, followed in quick succession by more. Some in their eagerness actually vaulted almost across the boat. They were simply attracted by the light, which, guarded on the sides by the captain's boards, shone out clear and bright both fore and aft. They leaped about us, approaching nearer and nearer until a sufficient number for any hotel breakfast were secured.



JUPITER NARROWS, INDIAN RIVER.

The captain produced a corn sack, placed them in it, and put out the torch, leaving us no light but that of the moon, as it played in wondrous loveliness over the water.

I settled down to enjoy it, when— presto! what new change is this? Is the captain a magician? Are we floating on a sea of silver? Are those fish metallic? Surely never was a moon that illumined like this before.

"What is it?" I eagerly asked. "They say it is fas fore us," was the diffident reply.

And so it was. We were sailing on a phosphorescent sea, through which dashed in every direction phosphorescent fish. Standing in the bow I watched a fairy-like scene. Beneath me, through the water, darted what seemed to my excited fancy millions of fish, each apparently a piece of burnished silver. I could distinguish the jewfish, the sawfish and quantities of mullet and other common varieties all ablaze with light, and every scale on their bodies clearly defined. They looked like meteors as they cut their way through the water. The boat's prow threw back not a curling spray, but a gleaming mass of light. The waves did not break into shining drops from white crests, but rose and fell in polished rolls like molten metal. Farther out, where the stream moved more gently, the top of each tiny ripple became a flashing line, and crossing each other these lines lay on the water like frosted lace of an ever varying pattern.

In short, Indian river, the paradise of the fisherman and the hunter, with its oranges, its pineapples, its thriving towns and opening industries, deserves not a letter, nor a chapter, but a book, in two volumes, bound with the skins of its own alligators—the dethroned kings that are still heirs of the realm. H. K. INGRAM.

HE WAS A GALLANT SOLDIER.

His Name Was Capt. George D. Wallace, and He Fell Near Pine Ridge.

Capt. George D. Wallace, who was killed recently in a battle with the Sioux Indians near Pine Ridge agency, was 42 years old at the time of his death. His boyhood was spent in South Carolina. At the age of 20 he received an appointment to the West Point Military academy, and his record of promotion was as follows: Second lieutenant, Seventh cavalry, June 11, 1872; first lieutenant, June 25, 1876; captain, Sept. 23, 1885.

Wallace took part in the frontier campaigns of 1876, and on the day when Custer fell was only twenty miles from the scene of the battle, being then in charge of the wagon train. It was by meritorious service as an Indian fighter through nine successive years that he gained a captaincy. Then he was detailed to the school of instruction at Leavenworth, and from there went to the school of rifle practice at Jefferson barracks, St. Louis. A year ago he rejoined his command, and the other day marched out to meet death at the hands of a savage foe. He commanded Troop L of the Seventh cavalry, and was much loved by his soldiers. It is said that during former winter campaigns he went for nights at a time without sleep that his tired sentinels might rest, and often on the march he took the coat from his back to shelter the shivering shoulders of a sick or wounded private.



CAPT. G. D. WALLACE.

Andrew Jackson's Errors.

The errors of Andrew Jackson are now universally acknowledged, since Americans have grown wise enough to see that greatness is not necessarily faultless. Omitting minor matters, the passages in his life which all Americans now regard are three: his marriage, his duels and other personal encounters, and his so-called appointment and removal policy. Partisan malice once painted his acts as fustian; his eulogists made them innocent or praiseworthy. At present the plain truth is enough.

Education Among the Mormons.

The census bureau announces that the "first complete statement of schools controlled by a religious body" has been received from the secretary of the general board of education of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The figures show that in Arizona, Idaho and Utah the Mormons employ ninety-six teachers, who have charge of 5,092 pupils of both sexes.

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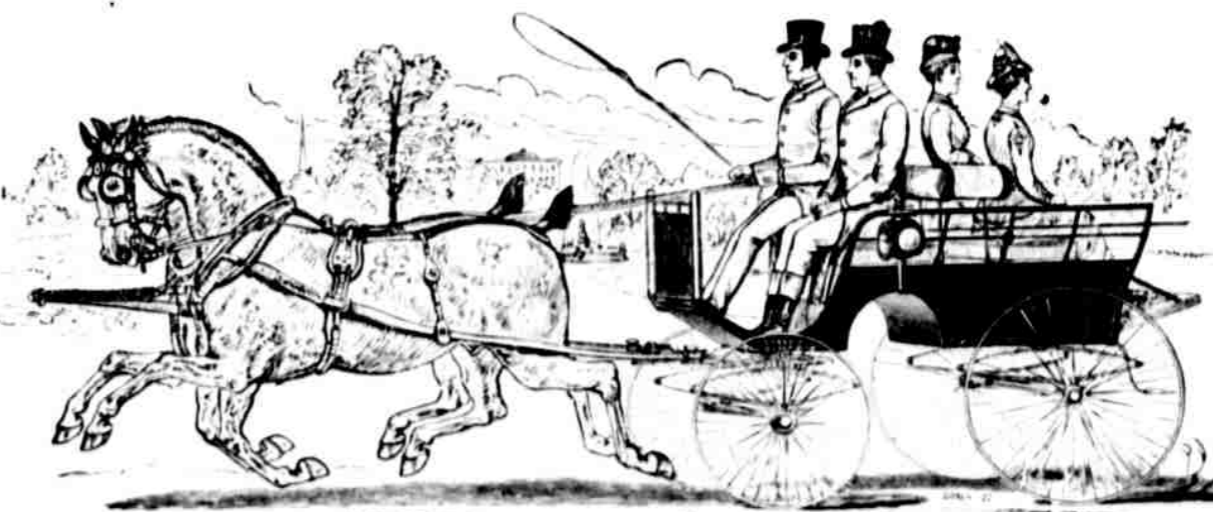
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