TEMPTING THE ALLIGATORS.

Dangerous Carelessness of Passengers in the Southern Marshes.

Too Lazy perhaps journeyed between New Orleans and Mobile, and numerous for the vast expanse of marsh with railways cutting through it. In the midst of this desolation is a clubhouse and a railway station called Eagleton. It is still good fishing and shooting ground, but the alligator has become so scarce that the sight of one is a novelty. Ten or twelve years ago they crawled across the railroad tracks, and passengers had but to look out of the window to see them swimming.

One day during my week's stay at the club several boats were going out, and one of them was occupied by a French army officer, who was also a guest. He had on a frock coat, and when seated in the stern of the skiff he was almost dipped the water.

"Better take off that coat or pin the tails up," said one of the punters, as his attention was directed.

"Why?"

"Because an alligator may pull you overboard."

The Frenchman laughed and shrugged his shoulders and led the way down stairs. Four boats of us anchored about 100 feet apart, and the craft I was in was next to the officer's. The fish were biting hot and heavy, and for an hour no one paid any attention to anybody else. I tangled my line in pulling in a fish, and while working at the knot happened to glance toward the Frenchman. Just as I did so I saw the still waters broken behind him, caught sight of a black object dives above the surface, and next instant, amidst a scream which was heard half a mile away, the man was pulled out of the boat and under water.

We hurried to the spot, but nothing whatever marked the site of the tragedy. Even his hat had gone. We rowed up and down and beat the banks, but it was useless.

"Told him so," said the punter as we gave up the search. "These foreigners don't seem to know alligator game. We had a Prussian here last month, and what did he do but hang his legs in the water, and he was pulled off the boat with one only four feet away."—Detroit Free Press.

Turning the Conversation.

A writer in The Nineteenth Century tells several stories of the fate of persons men who went to Cardinal Newman to talk to him as one great controversialist to another.

One specimen of the class comes with notes and books and points for discussion on problems of education, but finds the cardinal so absorbed with news about the "barley crop" in Norfolk that no other subject seems to interest him.

Another presses him for a refutation of one of Mr. Gladstone's arguments against the Vatican decrees, but only succeeds in eliciting the reply that Mr. Gladstone is an old Oxford acquaintance, and has been very kind to him. Or if the subject is insisted on the conversation suddenly passes—his visitor knows not how—to the cake of Hawarden, and the exercise of cutting down trees.

A third visitor finds himself engaged at the outset in a discussion as to the number of stoppages in the 1.20 train as contrasted with the 3.40, and has unexpectedly to employ his conversational talent in explaining his cross country route and the lines by which he came.

And then there is the Oxford story of Newman's guest who introduces the "origin of evil" at dinner, and at once produces a dissertation—full of exact knowledge, and apparently delivered with earnest interest—as to the different ways of treading his house grapes and the history of the particular grapes on the table before him.

Sensickness.

A French scientific man has a new theory of the cause of sensickness, which is briefly stated below. Perhaps if one were to give himself up wholly to an attempt to understand the theory he might forget to be sick.

The proponder of this theory, M. Rethet, points out the enormous capacity of the reservoir formed by the muscular and peripancular venous system, and the considerable role of tonicity and voluntary or reflex muscular contractions in the action of emptying it; also the predominance of reflex muscular actions over voluntary in keeping one's balance and in most movements.

In the movements of a vessel the relaxation of muscular tonicity and suppression of reflex movements result in a considerable increase of the peripheric reservoir, and as a consequence in cerebral anemia.—Youth's Companion.

Prices of Fancy Woods.

Of the woods that are chiefly used in fancy cabinet work ebony comes mostly from Ceylon and Madagascar, and is sold by importers at eight cents per pound. Satin wood is grown on the island of San Domingo and in Porto Rico. It is one of the beautiful woods and is described as a "canary yellow." In the log it sells at seventy-five cents per foot. Tulip wood is but little used. It is imported more for turning and inlaying than anything else. It is found in Central America, and when brought to New York sells for eight cents per pound.—Boston Transcript.

The First Name Best.

Jim—Where will you sit to-night?

Jack—In a chatter—I mean a private box.

Jim—Never mind. Chatterbox goes.—Pittsburg Bulletin.

A Poor Critic.

A woman called at the department of charities the other day bearing a letter from a charitable Sewickley lady which stated that of the three varieties of poor persons, namely, "God's poor, the devil's poor and poor critters" the bearer was of the third named special and deserved special aid. She was sent to the county home.—Pittsburg Commercial.

An Inventor for Ocean Propellers.

A Bridgeport (Conn.) mechanic has invented a new method of adjusting propellers for ocean steamers. It consists of three great horizontal shafts lying parallel to each other, and extending outward from the stern of the vessel. To each shaft a three-blade screw propeller is attached, the central or middle one being, in one, just twice that of the other two propellers. Within the vessel the three shafts are joined transversely with strong rods, and lever clamps attached so that one or all can be instantly detached if necessary. A triple expansion engine of great power is to run each shaft. The inventor claims his system will give a more uniform motion, and with the same horse power exerted by the engines will give far greater results.

Another important point with the invention is the easy resources it possesses in the case of a breakdown. When at sea the crystal loss of a shaft or part of an engine is often a serious matter. In this device there are nine combinations which can be made to run the ship. This may be better understood by saying that the three engines and the three shafts must each be broken or decided to put the ship in a helpless condition. Hence even two shafts should break the combined horse power of the three engines can be thrown upon or applied to the remaining shaft, and the speed be not greatly diminished. Should one or two engines break down the remaining engine can still run one, two or three propellers.—Boston Transcript.

A Child's Theology.

The things that are told children and the old wife stories with which they are put off are among the most contemptible of all the scraps that are heaped upon the children under the pretext of instructing them. The little tots know well enough that they are being imposed upon, but they do not know how to protest; and yet now and then one of them with the bold frankness of childhood does say out boldly just what it thinks.

It was one of those naively born children who was being talked to about going to bed in the dark. She had perhaps been taught to be afraid by being told that she must not fear, that being the approved method of instructing the little folk in this branch of their education, but in any case, whatever the method, she had learned her lesson, and she was very satisfactorily afraid.

"But, my dear," her mother said to her one night when the child was more than usually dismayed by the prospect of being alone in the dark in bed, "why should you be afraid in the dark? God is there."

Her little daughter regarded her with troubled eyes.

"But, mamma," she said, "what if he is, what difference does that make?"—Boston Courier.

Brazilian Pebble and Glass.

What is called Brazilian pebble is often nothing but a fine quality of glass. The real Brazilian pebble is a kind of rock crystal found in many parts of the world, but in great profusion in Brazil, and hence the name. There is a pet superstition that the Brazilian pebble glasses preserve the sight, but no solid foundation for it exists. Fine glass is every whit as good, and costs far less on account of the labor and care required to grind the crystal to the proper shape. The only real advantage the crystal lenses have over those of glass is in the hardness of the material, which renders them much less liable to become scratched and so dimmed, but otherwise the glass is as good.

There are several tests by which to distinguish the genuine pebble from the glass imitation, but the one most easily applied is that of touch. The real pebble will feel for colder to the finger or tongue than the glass, so much so that after touching a glass lens and then one of crystal, any one will be able to detect the difference.—Interview in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Some Yarns About Queer People.

John Ashton in his book on zoology says that the gentleman with one eye is the Cyclops that Pliny tells about. It is hinted that the Cyclopes were miners whose lamps on their hats were mistaken for eyes. A good many of the whoppers of antiquity arose from the reporter giving only one look before he came back to the office and wrote up his stuff. But the anthropologist that had only one foot, and that so big that they could lie on their backs and use their feet for umbrellas are clear pure invention, the same as the stories about Chicago girls' feet. The public ought to be and the same is hereby warned against any and all such deceptions.

A gentleman named Megasthenes told the people of his day that there were folks in India that live only by smelling apples and that immediately something perishes in a nation and breathed on them. This is also probably a campaign document.—Chicago Tribune.

Salt in Arabia.

The Arabs have no "Hello!" in their language. The nearest they come to it is to throw a stone and hit a man on the back, and then ask him as he turns around, "Does it please heaven to give you good health this morning?"—Detroit Free Press.

A Shamrock Factory.

O'Callahan—Bedad! I want a shamrock over a bar. Where'll I get wan?

O'Bryan (scenic artist)—Come wid me. I'm makin' shamrocks every week of me life.—Pittsburg Bulletin.

T. B. Aldrich has taken advantage of his release from editorial duties to achieve more literary work than had been possible for him before in some years. On the other hand, Horace E. Scudder, since assuming the chair Mr. Aldrich vacated, has found no leisure to accomplish anything beyond the work connected with his position as an editor.

THE PEARL OF THE PACIFIC.

Some Peculiar Characteristics of the People of the City of Lima.

Lima has been called the Pearl of the Pacific and other fantastic names. In the old days of the viceroys it was beyond doubt the finest, as it was the richest, city in New Spain; but now it is a sadly sullied pearl, a moribund and sort place, where everything bears witness to dissolution, poverty and absence of repair. The streets swarm with beggars, and the majority of the 100,000 inhabitants of the capital live in an indigent, primitive and thoroughly unhygienic manner, which would be unendurable were it not for the clemency of the climate, which encourages and conduces to a languid and indolent mode, comparable in some aspects to the famous of the Turk.

Indeed, the street life of Lima frequently reminded me of that of Constantinople, which is likewise a city of sinuous movements, barred windows and overhanging mirandas. In the first place, you find a similar abundance of moving changers, who have their counters open to the street, and display to the overcomers of the impecunious a selection of gold and silver coins and bank notes, mixed up with jewelry, plate and miscellaneous bric-a-brac. The Lima money changers also deal in lottery tickets and in "lottery-bonds"—the generic name for those accursed box of curious, ingenious, unwholesome and hideous contrivances which form the basis of Peruvian activities.

These "bonds" ought to be dug up among the ruins of the ancient Inca cities, but much of the pottery is now made in a modern manufactory at Tacna. I have always noted that the scarcer money is in a country and the worse the state of its finances the more numerous are the tables of the money changers. The evidence of Lima confirms this observation. The finances of the country are notoriously in a fearful state. Although the mountains of Peru are full of gold, silver and other precious metals, there is not a native gold coin to be found in the country except as a historical curiosity, and the very small amount of coin in circulation is of the most primitive and inconvenient kind, consisting of coarse copper one and two cent pieces and very heavy silver dollars, too weighty to be carried in a civilized man's pocket.

The consequence is an extensive credit system and the use of bank checks. The Limeans prefer to run into debt freely rather than be burdened with a few pounds of silver dollars.—Theodore Child in Harper's.

Electricity the Motor of the Future.

The assumption seems fair that the locomotive engine will have been superseded when we double our speeds, and that we must find ways to utilize the weights of the cars themselves for adhesion, and to make each carry its own motor. This evidently points to electric traction, the only method as yet discovered of keeping the horse in the stable, and yet of making him do his work without taxing us for his own carriage. I have very little question that, where railways are carrying large numbers of passengers on short routes, as on our elevated systems of road—where, if ever, we may reach enormously high speeds—the electric motor, or some advance even on that latest marvel of invention and engineering, must come into use. Heat, light and electricity will then compete in that coming revolution which shall combine for us the speed of the bird, the comforts of home, and the safety of the hermit's cell. And what must come will come.—Professor R. H. Thurston in Forum.

Where Work Never Ceases.

There is no such thing as rest for the day laborers in the downtown districts, no matter what the condition of the weather may be. The pressure of time is so strong, and the demands of business so imperative, that masons, hod carriers, hod shakers, barrow men, carpenters, engineers and truckmen work regularly through the most violent kind of storms. Apparently they have become inured to the hardships, for they never make any effort to get in the shelter of a protecting wall, or keep under the cover of the sheds which are extended over the sidewalks for portions of the work. There was a time, at one time that brick and mason work put up in the rain was not to be depended upon. No such rules are followed nowadays. Half the big buildings downtown owe their rapid construction to work carried on in stormy weather and by means of electric lights at night.—New York Sun.

The Cost of a Pun.

"No, I can't see any fun in playing on words," said the man in the big mackintosh gloomily. "A pun once cost me $100,000." "How was it?" "You needn't gather round me. It isn't much of a story. A fat old aunt had come to visit us. They told me to go in the parlor and pay my respects. I was a very smart young man. I went in and told her in a cheery, offhand way that I had come in to make my obeisance to my dear aunt. That's all there is of it." "But how about the $100,000?" "She left a to her other nephew."—Chicago Tribune.

A Human Flying Squirrel.

Professor Grisse, a member of the German Society of Aërostation, residing at Berlin, has invented a machine called a sprungfligel, by the aid of which, with no assistance except his own muscular power, a man may leap into the air and fly a long distance.—St. Louis Republic.

A Tough Job.

Minister's Wife (looking up from the paper)—The idea! A minister in Michigan has brought a bill of $500 against an estate for preaching the funeral sermon of a wealthy citizen there. What in the world did he make such a charge for!

Good Minister (gravely)—I presume it was to satisfy his conscience.—New York Weekly.

"Oh, oh, let me see, what do you give the world for the right to live?" asked Jones in a spirit of intelligent inquiry of a doctor with whom he was slightly acquainted, as he took him on the street. "Always, sir, the same question, sir, do we give? asked the doctor, rather pleased that someone could, and desired, to know the modest income, the fortune, the fashionable, the rich, the poor, the middle income, the fortune expenditure. Well, I generally take a little and definite—that 'Good morning,' and we never question it. Good morning, Quakers, Hicksites, Dunkards, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Universalists, Unitarians, Lutherans, Catholics, Jews, Gentiles, Christians, Mormons, Infidels, Free Thinkers, Free Lovers, Free Livers, Free Drinkers, Free Smokers, Free Chewers, Free Spenders, Free Lunch