

THE EAGLE'S BOAST.

No other bird in all the sky  
So high or so far as I fly  
With useless wings I cleave the air,  
I here and there and everywhere  
I seek for some one to adore,  
Now soaring with the zephyrs light,  
Whoever I go—through the air,  
I'm monarch of the atmosphere!

IN ALLIGATOR COUNTRY

A stray chicken wandered aimlessly about a small clearing. Now he stopped to peck at a bright pebble, then hunched forward to examine a bunch of muskgrass. He was attracted to the water's edge and spread out over the banks. And everywhere clambered the fox grape bignonia and woodbine.

Beyond the creek, and stretching away for a hundred miles to the south and west, were the Everglades. In the distance gleamed the blue waters of Lake Okechobee. To the east was a wilderness, to the north twenty miles of almost impenetrable jungle.

And in the midst, the little clearing, lonely and wild and ugly. For, except where the log cabin stood near the center, the trees had been merely girdled, and now rose white and ghostly, their gray, skeletal arms creaking and groaning with every breeze.

And sure enough, an immense cat was found under one of the live oaks. As Mr. Lowery pointed to the small wood in the base of the skull, he looked at his companion significantly.

"You or I," he said, "could never have done this at such a distance." Mr. Danielson made no reply, but he looked at the strong, little figure of the young girl with renewed interest.

"She will be a grand woman some day," he thought. "If only her language was not so barbarous." But as the weeks went by even her language seemed less harsh to his ears.

"You must go slow, Danielson," he said kindly. "You are but 25, and Liza is no ordinary girl. But you know the impossibility?" For a moment his companion made no reply, then he raised his eyes slowly.

"Yes," he said quietly, "I know the impossibility. I have convinced myself of it a hundred times. The girl is absolutely ignorant—a crackpot while I am—what books and money have made me. And yet," he continued after a pause, "as soon as I convince myself of its absurdity I am sure to begin to make plans to take her North and give her an education."

"But you must have her consent, and—excuse me—the whole plan is idiotic." "I know it." A moment later he arose and walked toward the cabin. Mr. Lowery watched him curiously.

"I fancy our alligator hunting is about over," he thought. The next afternoon, as the two were practicing duets together, Mr. Danielson asked the girl in a matter-of-fact tone, "How would you like to go North and study music, Liza?" She raised her eyes frankly. This was one of her attractions—she never showed embarrassment or self-consciousness.

year of, but paw says what he don't know 'bout gators ain't with takin' les'n's on." But Mr. Lowery looked doubtful. "I remember Cleb," he said, "but it strikes me that he would be rather a small chap in case of an emergency. A twelve-footer would be apt to take advantage of him."

"Paw says Cleb kin git away with mos' anything." He "lows he ar quicker nor lightning." "Very well," we'll try him, of course. It is thirty miles to the nearest settlement where a guide could be found. Now suppose we go in and have a talk with your father."

An hour later Cleb came in, a small, freckled-face boy with quick, sharp eyes, which seemed to take in everything. Soon after appeared Mr. Lowery's man with the campequige. "I suppose we can have the old camp site by the creek?" Mr. Lowery inquired.

"Suttinly, suttinly!" responded Mr. Dobson, heartily. "You uns act jes' like yeh w'art home an' he's yo'sers. The's raft's 'o' garden sass an' melons spillin'." Before night the camp was ready, and late in the evening the two men with their young guide went down the creek with a preliminary "brush" with the alligators. And it did not take long to discover that the girl's praise of her brother was justifiable.

As Mr. Lowery's man said, "he was a peeler." Before many days the two men expressed themselves as perfectly satisfied with his services. And as the days went by the relations between the house and camp grew more intimate. Mr. Danielson was an enthusiast in his profession, and found the voice of the young girl fully as attractive as an alligator.

One day Mr. Lowery took him to task. "You must go slow, Danielson," he said kindly. "You are but 25, and Liza is no ordinary girl. But you know the impossibility?"

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She raised her eyes frankly. This was one of her attractions—she never showed embarrassment or self-consciousness. "Just 'er low I'd like ter learn things right much," she said simply, "but sen' paw's ben sick an' my monkey shak I've gin bit all up. Hit mus' be gran' ter know things like you uns."

There was a wistfulness in her voice which he took instant advantage of. "If you could arrange to go North with us," he said eagerly, "you would have a chance to learn everything. My mother would look after you, I am sure."

"Hit's too late—an' the's other things." "What?" "At this moment Mr. Lowery came up. With him was a tall young man in rough costume. "Excuse the interruption, Danielson," said Mr. Lowery, "but I want you to know my friend Norton. You've heard me speak of him. My guide among the Keys—saved my life off Anolee and near lost his own."

Mr. Danielson advanced cordially. He had heard many stories of this brave guide—this Apollo among the cowboys. But before he could grasp his hand a lithe figure sprang before.

"O Bob! We didn' 'speak yeh 'fore orange pickin'!" Then, turning about, she added with a charming air of proprietorship, "Hit's my Bob."—Waverly's Magazine.

"While we waited at the head of the Long Portage on the Neipigon River for our half-breeds to carry up the canoe," writes a contributor, "a wretched yellow dog crawled out of some alder bushes and looked at us. His Ojibway masters, descending with their winter's take of furs, had abandoned him to starve. Poor creature! His ribs were almost through his mangy coat, his face shrunken to a mere skull, his piteous eyes dreary with sorrow and suffering."

"Ah, why did they leave me?" said that old dog so plainly as it is here written. "Why, after I had served them so long, been kicked so much, and loved them so dearly?"

"He crawled from the thicket just to know whether there was any mercy in the two white men. My friend said, 'Poor old dog—poor fellow!' and tossed him a piece of bread. The dog slunk back, hesitated, turned, crouched low, crawled back towards the bread. 'Poor fellow! poor old fellow!' we said.

"Perhaps the tones encouraged him. He ate, not ravenously, for he was too far gone. All the while he looked his gratitude, yet fearfully. At last he lay down by our packs, saying clearly enough, 'Let me be your dog and watch for you.' He blinked his aged thanks because we did not refuse.

"Now when Antoine arrived, he put down his end of the canoe, seized a paddle, and wallowed that woebegone dog before we could hinder. Afterward we tempted the creature back out of the bushes to lick up grease poured from a frying-pan upon a flat rock. Antoine and Louis were much disgusted by this.

"At portage after portage we found one or more such forsaken dogs. Antoine invariably pelted or kicked the crouching creatures, while Louis looked on with approval. "Oh, dey's no good; dey's too hol'," said the old man in reply to our rebukes.

"At the Island Portage we found a fine old dog whose joy at seeing Louis was great. That stoic looked on unmoved, while Antoine kicked the poor brute away. In spite of this treatment, he followed along the eastern shore as we paddled up the river. When we camped on the western side he stood howling dismally.

"He was a good dog," said Louis, without concern. "He was my brudder Narcisse dog dat's dead. Den my brudder Francois took him."

"It's a shame to leave him to starve." "Oh, he's hol' now!" said Louis, with surprise. "Late that evening the wretched dog skulked into camp. We kept him in trout during our stay. After that? Well, one fancies him running his strength away trying to catch Neipigon hares, and at last laying his tired old bones down to molder and bleach far away on the hills."

"What's home without a mother, rocked in the cradle of the deep, old folks at home, my bonnie blue eyes, comrades, never take the horseshoe from the door, I kissed her on the sly—"

He rustled his sheets 'o' songs and said: "Wots de best time to sell? O, at night, of course. I kin sell some days, when trade is lush, 200 coppers at 2 cents each; dat's 84; my share'll be jest half."

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

HIS EXPERIENCE AT CHRIST'S BIRTHPLACE.

Immortal Masterpieces of Art Which Portray the Scenes of the Nativity—Mission of Children in the Scriptures—The Shepherds and Other Heros.

Bethlehem Days.

Rev. Dr. Talmage's text was Luke II, 14. "And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."

The black window shutters of a December night were thrown open, and some of the best singers of a world were made to sing, stood there, and waiting back the drapery of cloud, chanted a peace anthem, until the echoes of hill and valley applauded and echoed the Hallelujah chorus. Come, let us go into that Christmas scene as though we had never before worshipped a manger. There is a Madonna worth looking at. I wonder not that the most frequent name in all lands and in all Christian centuries is Mary. And there are Marys in palaces and Marys in cabins, and those of Germany and France and Italy, and Spanish and English pronounce it differently, they are all namesakes of the one whom we find on a bed of straw, with her pale face against the soft cheek of Christ in the night of the Nativity. All the great painters have tried on canvases to present Mary and her child, and the incidents of that most famous night of the world's history, Raphael, in three different masterpieces, celebrated them. Titmoretto and Gherlandajo surpassed these, and the great painter of the Magi, Correggio needed to do nothing more than his Madonna to become immortal. The Madonna of the Lily, by Leonardo da Vinci, will kindle the admiration of all ages. But all the galleries of Dresden are forgotten when I think of the small room of that gallery containing Sisto's Madonna. Yet all of them were copies of St. Matthew's Madonna and Luke's Madonna, the inspired Madonna of the Old Book, which we had put into our hands when we were infants, and that we hope to have under our heads when we die.

Behold, in the first place, that on the first night of Christ's life God honored the brute creation. You cannot get into that Bethlehem barn without going past the manger, and before you reach the oxen. The brutes of that stable heard the first cry of the infant Lord. Some of the old painters represent the oxen and camels kneeling that night before the newborn babe. And well might they kneel. Christ came among other things to alleviate the sufferings of the brute creation. Was it not appropriate that He should during the first few days and nights of His life on earth, be surrounded by dumb beasts, whose moan and plaint and howl have for ages been a prayer to God for the arresting of their tortures and the righting of their wrongs? It did not merely "happen so" that the unintelligent creatures of God should have been that night in close neighborhood with the babe.

Not a kennel in all the centuries, not a bird's nest, not a worn-out horse on a towpath, not a herd freezing in the poorly built cow pen, not a freight car in the summer time bringing the leaves to the north, not a single bird, not a worm and miles of agony, not a surgeon's room witnessing the struggles of fox or rabbit or pigeon or dog in the horrors of vivisection but has an interest in the fact that Christ was born in a stable, surrounded by dumb beasts. He remembers that night, and the prayer He heard in the pitiful moan He will answer in the punishment of those who maltreat the dumb brutes. They surely have as much right in this world as we have. In the first chapter of Genesis you may see that they were placed on the earth before man, the fish and fowl created the fifth day, and the quadrupeds the morning of the sixth day, and man not until the afternoon of that day. The whale, the eagle, the lion, and all the brutes were created before man, the predecessors of the human family. They have the world by right of possession. They have also paid rent for the places they occupied. What an army of defense over the land are the faithful watchdogs, the sentinels of the world, who over the horse and camel and ox for transportation. And robin and lark have, by the cantatas with which they have filled orchard and forest, more than paid for the few grains they have picked up. They are the sentinels of the world, the sentinels of the human family. They have the world by right of possession. They have also paid rent for the places they occupied. What an army of defense over the land are the faithful watchdogs, the sentinels of the world, who over the horse and camel and ox for transportation. And robin and lark have, by the cantatas with which they have filled orchard and forest, more than paid for the few grains they have picked up. They are the sentinels of the world, the sentinels of the human family. They have the world by right of possession. 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