VALENTINES OF 1904.

"Pickaninny" Designs the Favorites This Year—Some "Cute" Verses.

The little blind god must breathe a sigh when he remembers what St. Valentine's Day used to be. For his dear sake duels were fought a century ago,

"WILL YO' BE MAH VALENTINE?"

and even in later days February 14 was celebrated as a day sacred to lovers.

Now valentines may be bought for a few cents, and are carelessly put into the postbox to go rushing through the mails with thousands of similar missives. However, in the fact that the children of this generation still cling to the custom of sending gifts to one another on that day lies the hope that in the years to come little folks will not entirely forget the old traditions.

For weeks valentines for sale have been flaunted in the faces of men, women and children all over the city, and the saved-up pennies have been burning the little ones' pockets.

Probably more of these same pennies have been invested in the pickaninnies than in any other kind of valentine this year. There is the cut figure of the "gem'man of cullah," attired in a long green coat radiant with brass buttons and a "plug" hat atop of his head. He entreats, "Will yo' be mah valentine?" or declares, "I'm yo' valentine, chile."

Again, there is the mammy, loved by all Southern children, who, in her green striped dress and purple polka dotted sunbonnet, consents to be your valentine. Butchers armed with carving knives, and cooks in cap and apron, carrying aloft a steaming pudding, are other forms of these cut out figures. "I've waited, honey, waited long for you," is the sentiment affixed to the picture of a little darky girl—or, rather, of her back. Her woolly hair stands straight out at the sides in short braids tied with green ribbon. Her short frock is a vivid red, and in her hands that are clasped behind she holds a string attached to a little flop eared black dog.

Another little pickaninny that has a bee hovering near him remarks: "Since dey called me Honey, I kin see dat dis bee has his eye on me."

Love's Marconigram sent from Red Heart Station, per Cupid's current, is a novelty of this season. It advertises to connect hearts at a moment's notice by the side glance system.

Many fancy postal cards have been sent as valentines. One of the prettiest has a picture of a chubby youngster in tasselled cap and mittens reaching up to open a mail box, and the verse below reads:

All a-tiptoe I will be until my Valentine I see.

Besides the postman, who had a busy day of it yesterday, the candy man was much in evidence, for sweets have come to play a great part as St. Valentine's Day gifts. Hundreds of heart shaped boxes of various sizes and designs, filled with dainty

"I'LL BE YOURS AN' YOU KIN BE MINE."

chocolates and bonbons, have been received to-day with this message: "Sweets to the sweet."

Big or little, costly or cheap, a valentine is a valentine all the world 'round, and he who receives the token may know that it carries with it the kindly thoughts of the sender.

PRIZE "INCIDENT" AND OTHERS.

Boys and Girls Write Many Interesting Accounts of Their Experiences.

Percy Buck, who wrote the first of the following articles, wins the $2 prize offered for the best account of "an incident in my life." Many, many little men and women had interesting experiences to write about, and we are sorry that we have not a prize for each one of them.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH A GUN.

The summer that I was nine years old I went to visit an aunt in the northern part of Vermont. My aunt lived about two miles from the village, upon one of the Green Mountains. There was a boy about fourteen years old from Boston there for his health, and he had a .22-calibre rifle. I had been out with him hunting, but I got independent, and I thought I would go out and try my luck alone. There were plenty of woodchucks about the farm to practise on. I started out secretly one morning, and when I got up on the hill back of the house I spied a woodchuck. I whistled to him and he sat up. I got down in the tall grass and crept behind a ledge of rocks, and then I began to run so I could get near enough to shoot. All of a sudden I ran onto a large bird that flew up in front of me, and frightened me so it almost made my hair stand on end. I never stopped to see what it was, but turned and ran away as fast as my feet would carry me. Then, getting a little courage, I turned around and fired four times at the bird, but did not stop long enough to take much aim. Then I started and ran for the house, about a half mile distant, faster than before. I arrived all out of breath, and trembling so with fright that I could hardly talk. When I got so I could talk I told my uncle my adventure, and I thought he would choke with laughter, and he called me a "brave hunter," to get scared by an old partridge protecting her young ones.

PERCY BUCK (aged 13).

Box 83, West Northfield, Mass.

MY SISTER'S BIRTHDAY.

One bright June morning I went out very early, and long before breakfast time, to take a walk in the woods. It was before sister was awake that I started, for it was dear sister's birthday, and I wanted to give her a lovely birthday surprise. So as soon as I reached the woods I began to pick all the prettiest flowers I could find. There were endless numbers of them, and in a short time I had my basket full of violets, anemones and columbines and lovely wild roses, sweetest of all wild blossoms. I hastened home with my treasures and found to my delight that sister was still asleep. Softly I stole into her bedroom. Then I began to arrange the fragrant blossoms and lay them in bunches all over the bed. Close by her hand, almost in it, I laid a bright rose, gay of the choicest blossoms of all kinds; and all that were left I scattered over the counterpane, till the whole bed looked like one great posy. There never was a prettier birthday surprise, and when sister awoke she thought at first that she was in Fairyland.

Catskill, N. Y. LOUISE ENGLERT.

AN EXPERIENCE ON THE ELEVATED.

On a spring morning, seven years ago, mother and I were going to New-York from Yonkers to buy several articles for our summer preparation.

I was very proud to be buying my first sunbonnet, and when, on reaching the city, we selected a pink one, my cup of joy was full.

After we had done our other shopping, we started for the elevated. We got in a train, which had few people in it, and I, liking to see the engine, went to the corner seat in the front car.

I was much interested in the engine, and, except to give my sunbonnet a pat every once and a while, kept my eyes on it most of the time. I was so much interested, in fact, that I did not see a train coming toward us on our very track, until it was quite near.

At One-hundred-and-tenth-st., where the elevated is at its highest, I was just going to remark to mother that that train looked as if it was on our track, when I saw the other engineer whirl himself out of the cab, and the next minute—smash! bang! The nose of the other engine had come through the window and door of the car I was sitting in.

Mother grabbed my hand and hurried to the other end of the car, but, as I followed, I was sure to hold on to my precious sunbonnet tight.

We waited on the tracks for the next train, and when it came we got on and went safely on our way.

When we reached home, we told all about it to the people there, who listened with wide open eyes. After that I would not go in the front or back car for a long time.

ISABEL RANDOLPH (aged 12).

No. 252 West Eighty-fifth-st., New-York.

A VISIT TO LONGFELLOW'S HOUSE.

Last summer I went to Boston at the time of the National Educational Association convention, and my aunt took me to Cambridge to see Longfellow's house.

It is a square, yellow house, set in back from the street, with a garden in the back, and in front, across Brattle-st., is a park called Longfellow Park. The ground owned by the poet reached away through to the Charles River, and he requested that it should never be sold for house lots, for there was a beautiful view from his study window across the park over the river. His study is a large room at the front of the house.

The day I was there his daughter, Miss Alice Longfellow, was holding a reception for the teachers, and a guide explained the interesting things about the house. I saw the chair the children of Cambridge gave him, made out of the wood of the "spreading chestnut tree" he wrote about, because he felt so bad when it was cut down. The desk where many poems were written and the pen he wrote them with are still there, and the chair he used to sit in when he wrote his poems.

Before Longfellow owned the house it was known as the "Cragie house," and at one time was General Washington's headquarters during his stay at Cambridge in 1775.

F. IRENE WATSON.

No. 221 English-st., New-Haven, Conn.

AN EXPERIENCE IN CUBA.

During the occupation of the island of Cuba by the United States Army the following incident happened to three of us, sons of army officers:

As there were no American schools on the island at that time we went to a Cuban school in the village of Celba, which was situated about a mile and a half from Columbia Barracks, where our fathers were stationed. To get to the school it was necessary to cross a bridge, under which a train passed at about the same time that we crossed. It was our custom to drop stones on the train and then move away rather rapidly.

All went well until one morning, when crossing the bridge we noticed a Cuban "guardiano," or Rural Guard. One of the boys said: "Say, fellows, I say we don't throw any stones to-day; something's up," but like all boys, we were ready for fun. So we threw the stones and went on our way as usual. Just before we got to the school another "guardiano" stopped us and told us rather than asked us to wait a minute. One of the boys happened to look back, and said: "Look here, boys, what did I tell you?" and sure enough there came the other "guardiano" on the run, yelling, "Si, si, esos son los muchachos!" ("Yes, yes, those are the boys.") Well, we were frightened. As soon as the first "guardiano" came up we were harshly told in broken English to "come along." As we passed the schoolhouse the principal yelled out, "Olga, olga, a donde va usted con esos muchachos? Ellos son mis disipulos?" ("Say, say, where are you going with those boys? They are my scholars.") But the "guardianos" paid no attention whatever to him, and we kept on. Just before we got to the headquarters of the Rural Guard we met four or five soldiers, who said that they would tell our fathers of our arrest. We soon arrived at headquarters, where we were at liberty to walk around. We were not put in cells for the simple reason that there were none. At that place whenever they had very important prisoners they took them to Havana. Fortunately we had our lunch with us, as we were not released until 3 o'clock that afternoon, when our fathers bailed us out for $75 each. We never heard anything more about it, except that we all received checks for the $75. As you may guess, we never threw any more stones.

M. P. VESTAL (aged 14).

No. 17 Willow-st., Stamford, Conn.

Clarence—Father if a man from Portugal is a Portuguese is his little boy a Portugosling?—(Chums.

Things to Think About.

DIAMONDS.

One-quarter of vane; past tense of run; a girl's name beginning with H; to accept; a present that is loved by all children; a country of Europe; a substance used to put upon an article to make it appear like new; a busy insect; one-quarter of vane.

One-quarter of lens; not standing; a girl's name; one of the late assassinated Presidents of the United States; part of verb write; not well; one-quarter of lens.

One-third of are; everybody; to make over; not dry; one-third of are.

WORD SQUARES.

1. Not shut; a kind of evergreen; extremes; place of shelter for birds. The three foregoing diamonds and this word square were sent by Emily Beale.

2. To roll together; a long gown; German word for "but"; Saucy.

Charades of the names of American authors.

1. My first is not short; my second is part of the verb meaning to drop or sink; my third is an interjection of surprise, pain, etc.

2. My first is not high; my second is a measure of different lengths.

3. My first is a very small part; my second is a beverage used almost universally in England; my third is an alternative conjunction.

4. My first is to make a noise as a dove; my second is to make a noise like a cat.

5. My first is to crowd or squeeze; my second is a little bed.

6. My first is a piece of ground inclosed for public recreation; my second is a human being.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

My primals and finals spell the Christian name and surname of a President of the United States.

CROSS WORDS.

1 (Five letters)—herbage.
2. (Five letters)—The world.
3. (Three letters)—A river in Siberia that runs two thousand miles.
4. (Four letters)—Of a dark color, with white or gray spots.
5. (Four letters)—A crew or band.
6. (Seven letters)—Serious.
7. (Ten letters)—A novel by Charles Kingsley.
8. (Five letters)—An article of dress worn in front.

Answers to Puzzles Published Feb. 7.

DIAMONDS.

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      P
     D R Y
    P L E A D
   T E A S I N G
 P R E S I D E N T
   C O N D U C T
     K N E A D
       A N D
         T
         M
       T I E
     P E R R Y
   M I R A N D A
     A N N I E
       A D D
         A
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—(Sent by Stella Tomaschoff, No. 252 Seventh-ave., New-York City.

FLIGHT OF STAIRS.

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AND
ANDREW
    REWARD
        ARDENT
            ENTIRE
                IREFUL
                    FULMEN
                        MEN
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HIDDEN NAMES OF UNITED STATES PRESIDENTS.

1. Washington; 2. Lincoln; 3. Grant; 4. Roosevelt; 5. McKinley. Sent by Stella Tomaschoff.

DROPPED WORD PROVERBS.

1. All is not gold that glitters; 2. A stitch in time saves nine; 3. A rolling stone gathers no moss; 4. Don't cross a bridge until you come to it; 5. A penny saved is a penny earned.

CHARADES.

1. Ruinous; 2. Consecrate; 3. Insolent.

PRIZE PUZZLE AWARD.

Malcolm B. Jones, of No. 250 Berry-st., Brooklyn, N. Y., is the winner of the book offered for the neatest and most correct solution of the "Things to Think About" in The Tribune of February 7.

A beautiful edition of one of Hawthorne's books will be given as a prize for the best solution of the puzzles found in "Our Own Corner" to-day. All papers must be at the office by Thursday, February 18.

HONOR LIST.

Kenneth Moffat, Yonkers, N. Y.; Theodore Palmer, Cranford, N. J.; Charles Pines, Mount Vernon, N. Y.; James Dillaway, Bridgeport, Conn.; Elsie S. Hough, Paterson, N. J.; Joseph Murphy, Rockville Centre, Long Island; Lucy Khasan, New-York City; Jean Collins, Denver Mills, Col; Grace T. Hallock, Milton, N. Y.; Jean C. Wells, Johnstown, N. Y.; Marietta Fuller, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Elsie Uhlmann, New-York City; Josephine Gessler, New-York City; Marguerite Thresher, Norwich, Conn; Vernon Radcliffe, Brooklyn; Frederika Mason Kellogg, Waterbury, Conn.; Hulda A. M. Lindblom, Arlington, N. J.; William Seguine, Rosebank, N. Y.; Helen Fowler, New-Haven, Conn.; Myra Joslin Tyler, Yonkers, N. Y.; Anna M. Newburger, Erie, Penn.; Ranchen C. Adams, Bridgeport, Conn.; Florence R. T. Smith, Newton, N. J.; Frances H. Shaw, Yonkers, N. Y.; Kenward Tucker, Mount Vernon, N. Y.; Frieda Zehden, Elizabethport, N. J.; Jefferson Jones, Minneapolis, Minn.; Alice E. Bergen, South Brooklyn, N. Y.; Harold B. Bogert, Bayonne, N. J.; Harry Seward, Rutherford, N. J.; Margaret Porter, Hartford, Conn.; Julia Kingsley, New-York City; Elizabeth O. Harrison, Canastota, N. Y.; Edna Holman, New-Brunswick, N. J.; Jesse D. Schwartz, Clifton, Staten Island; Edward Corcoran, The Bronx, New-York City; Nelson P. W. Hill, Philadelphia, Penn.; Henry Taussig, New-York City; Josie Stafford, Canastota, N. Y.; Gertrude W. Moran, New-York City; Helen Wanamaker, Suffern, N. Y.; Helen Strait, Montclair, N. J.; E. Lester Mundy, Rahway, N. J.; Jeanette Mills, Gloversville, N. Y.; Margaret Booth, Waterbury, Conn.; Robert Booth, Waterbury, Conn.; Emily R. Cremer, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Olga Maria Kolff, Livingston, Staten Island; Gertrude Dorothea Schulze, New-Haven, Conn., and Alfreda M. Anderson, Newburg, N. Y.

"The young King of Spain's state coach is drawn by eight pure white horses with white plumes and white harness," says "Chums." "Plumes wave from each corner of the coach, and there is a crown in the centre."

THE DEAF POSTMAN AND THE FLEET BULLDOG.

"SAY!!— YOU DROPPED— A LETTER." —(Fliegende Blätter.

THINGS NEW, QUAINT, ODD AND INTERESTING, GATHERED HERE FROM ALL QUARTERS OF THE HABITABLE GLOBE

FLORIDA EVERGLADES.

Characteristics of This Great Stretch of Land and Water.

"Mile after mile of wavy green grass through which can be seen the glint of clear water, stretching east, west, north and south until bounded by the horizon; here and there in the wide expanse a bunch of trees or foliage rising islandlike out of the emerald sea, waterways of varying widths and depths penetrating in every direction; a silence unbroken save by the hum of insects, the rush of some wild animal through the grass or the stealthy approach of an Indian in his canoe—thus are the Florida Everglades, through some parts of which a white man has never passed."

In such graphic words Nelson Morris, a Plainfield (N. J.) man, who spent two weeks this winter in this "wilderness of America" visiting a friend owning a truck farm just within the Everglades, described this tract of land and water covering the greater part of the peninsula.

"These thousands of acres have lain dormant from time immemorial, and for the most part are given over to wild animals and wild men," he continued. "There are few settlements on the edges, but much of the tract has been deemed impenetrable, owing to the character of the morass and the impassable holes and sinks that break the surface, and is as much unknown to civilization as the heart of Africa. Settlers along the eastern edge know absolutely nothing about what lies ten miles inland, and will not until the time comes when these useless acres will be needed by American farmers, and the task of draining the marshland will be begun in earnest.

"The Everglades consist of great shallow lakes of pure, sweet water, varying in depth from one to six feet. Several good sized streams drain the tract, and scattered through the glades are many islands, some only a few yards square, others extending over hundreds of acres and covered with a dense growth of pines, palmettoes, vines and tropical trees. From the bottom of the lakes grow tall grasses that present a beautiful appearance when viewed from a distance.

"The word swamp as generally understood has no application to the Everglades, for they abound in pure water which is constantly moving in one direction or another, depending upon the topography of the country. The air is wholesome, pure and free from disease germs, and government statistics show that fevers and epidemic diseases are almost unknown. There are not even mosquitoes in the Everglades, for no stagnant pools exist in which the larvæ can thrive. The winds are generally from the southeast or south, but occasionally they blow from the north, and then the thermometer drops as low as 50 degrees Fahrenheit. This seldom happens, however, and the temperature of this entire region in winter averages 75 degrees, I was told. The air has plenty of life in it, containing what the people down there call 'ozone,' and the climate is similar to that of Cuba and the West Indies. The present flora consists of saw grass, flags, rushes, willows, gum, cypress, maple, etc., together with rubber trees, ferns and tropical growths, such as pineapples and cocoanuts.

"The grass is the greatest impediment to progress through the Everglades, three kinds of it being encountered. There is the matted, half floating grass, which is found where the water is shallow. The canoeist has some trouble in pushing through it at times, but ordinarily it is not noticed. Another kind is the round grass, which is abundant on the eastern edge, and, lastly, there is the saw grass, which is the terror of all who attempt to penetrate these tracts.

"This saw grass presents a most formidable front to the would-be explorer. Where the rocky undercrust comes near the surface, and there is little top soil, the saw grass may grow to a height of four feet, but stops there. Under better conditions, where there is a depth of soil sufficient to support it, it sometimes rises to the height of ten feet. It successfully stops progress, except where the canal-like waterways have been cut through by nature, and these are deceiving, running along apparently in the right direction for a few yards or perhaps miles, then ending in a blind, making it necessary for the canoeist to go all the way back to the point of beginning. It is better to make a detour of fifteen miles around this saw grass than to press one-half a mile through it. It has a sawlike edge on three sides, armed with coarse teeth, from which it derives its name, and these teeth are so sharp that they cut to the bone. So formidable is the grass that it is marvellous how the wild animals, especially the deer with their tender skins, manage to pass through it without painfully lacerating their flesh. Pushing a canoe through where it is thick is impossible, and when the stalks are cut down the stubble is so hard and sharp as to break holes in a canoe when forced along.

"The few Seminole Indians who people the Everglades avoid intercourse with the white men as much as possible. They have shown their wisdom by refusing to act as guides to parties of tourists anxious to penetrate the glades, for should they do so their secret trails would become known and the quiet lives they live in these fastnesses would be liable to interruption. If a white man gets lost in the glades an Indian may consent to guide him out, but never in. They have trails through the glades which they follow as unerringly as a New-Yorker walks from the Battery to Central Park.

"The only kind of a craft that can be used with any success in the Everglades is an Indian canoe. These are hollowed out of cypress logs and weigh two hundred or three hundred pounds. They are narrow for their length, sharp on the waterline forward, but above they flare out suddenly into a blunt bow. They are also narrow at the stern, where they finish in an overhang, upon which is built a platform or slight elevation, where the canoeist stands and poles the craft along. Paddles are unknown in the Everglades, the canoes being sent through the water by means of long poles.

"A vast number and variety of plumage birds still inhabit the Everglades, but are rapidly being exterminated, except in those isolated portions still free from visits from the white man. From this part of Florida come the beautiful plumes so much worn on the ladies' hats. The egret, roseate spoonbill and many varieties of parroquets are occasionally encountered in the dense parts of the Everglades."

ONE'S CLOTHES AND ONE'S WORK.

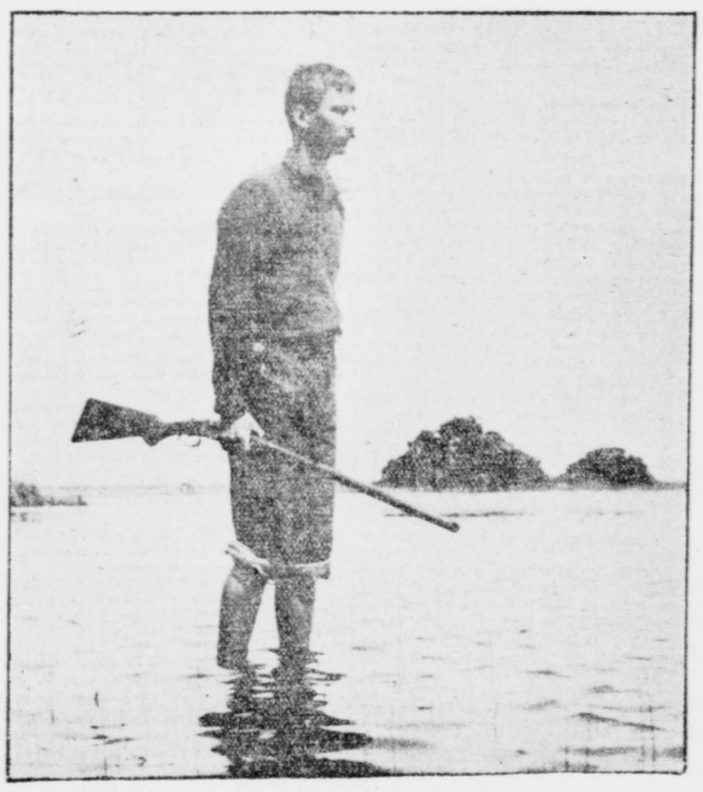
Wherever a marked personal care is exhibited for the cleanliness of the person and for neatness in dress, there is also almost always found extra carefulness as regards the finish of work done. Work people whose personal habits are slovenly produce slovenly work; those who are careful of their own appearance are equally careful of the look of the work they turn out. And probably what is true of the workroom is equally true of the region behind the counter. Is it not the fact that the smart saleswoman is usually rather particular about her dress, is averse from wearing dingy collars, frayed cuffs and faded ties? The truth of the matter seems to be that extra care as regards personal habits and general appearance is as a rule indicative of a certain alertness of mind, which shows itself antagonistic to slovenliness of all kinds.—(London Drapers' Record.

THE HARM NOISE DOES.

Noise is an undoubted factor in impairing the tone of the nerve centres. Whether we are conscious of it or not, it hurts the brain and has a deafening, dazing, bewildering effect on the mental processes. It tires the brain and tends to produce cerebral hyperemia. To live in a noisy atmosphere is to shorten one's days. Irritability, neurasthenia, insomnia are common effects. The tympanum or drum membrane of the ear is injured, the circulation of the cerebro-spinal fluid is disturbed, and the nerve cells themselves suffer as though subjected to mechanical violence.—(London Family Doctor.

JAPAN'S GREAT CRACKSMAN.

Japan has been much excited by the capture of its most famous criminal, Seishi Ono, alias Kimbei Wantanabe, whose audacious feats of breaking out of the Mayebashi Jail this year created a sensation throughout the island kingdom. When only a stripling of twenty Seishi broke into a provincial bank and made away with the sum of 10,000 yen. On another occasion he paid a nocturnal visit to S. Kurolwa, a millionaire in Numata, Gummaken, carrying off 100,000 yen worth of old coins and 50,000 yen in banknotes. He has been arrested twenty-three times, has made attempts to escape from prison no fewer than 110 times, passed ten years of his life behind prison bars, and robbed the public of a million yen, at the lowest estimation. Now he has been sentenced to imprisonment for a year and six months.—(London Telegraph.



A HUNTER IN THE EVERGLADES OF FLORIDA.

MANATEE OR SEA COW.

This Aquatic Animal Exceedingly Rare—Flesh a Delicacy.

The first thing a new winter visitor in Florida asks to see is the famous manatee, or Florida mermaid, also known locally as the sea cow, river calf, etc., of which he has heard so much. His desire is not often gratified now, as the manatee is an extremely rare animal on the Florida coast, although it was abundant some years ago. In order to have any chance of seeing this interesting creature one must visit the Indian River region of Florida between the months of May and November, as it seeks a warmer climate during the winter months.

By scientists the American manatee is classed under the family name Sirenia, and bears the special designation of Manatus Americanus. This group is quite small, comprising but two genera, the manatee and the dugong. A third genus, known as Rhytina, formerly existed in the North Atlantic Ocean at Behring's and Copper islands, and was discovered by the unfortunate navigator Behring, when wrecked on the island now bearing his name in 1741. Steller, an eminent German naturalist, who accompanied him, published the first description of the mammal. By 1768 not one was to be found, all having been exterminated by the crews of whaling and trading vessels.

The manatee is to be found now in the creeks, lagoons and estuaries of some of the West India Islands, at various spots on the Atlantic Coast of America from Florida as far south as about 20 degrees south latitude and in the great rivers of Brazil almost as high as their sources. It is also met with in similar situations on the opposite African shore from about 16 degrees north to 10 degrees south latitude, and as far into the interior as Lake Tchad.

As a general rule manatees prefer the shallow water of the bays, lagoons and large rivers, venturing but rarely into the open sea, and then not far from share. Their food consists exclusively of aquatic plants, on which they browse beneath the water. When not feeding, they lie near the bottom, supporting themselves on the extremity of the tail, which is shaped like a whale's, or slowly moving about by the assistance of the fore limbs, the tips of which are just allowed to touch the ground, and only raising the top of the head above the surface for the purpose of breathing at intervals of two or three minutes. In deeper water they often float with the body much arched, the rounded back close to the surface, and the head, limbs and tail hanging downward. The air in the lungs obviously assists them to maintain this unusual position, acting in the same manner as that in the air sac of fishes. They are extremely slow and inactive in their movements, and perfectly harmless and inoffensive.

A remarkable thing about the animal is the free use it makes of its fore limbs, which are similar to those of the seals. From the shoulder joint they can be moved in all directions, and the elbow and wrist permit of free extension and flexion. In feeding these mammals push the food toward their mouths by means of one of the hands, or both used simultaneously, and any one who has seen these limbs thus employed can readily believe the stories of their carrying their young under their arms, from which habit they have received the name of mermaid.

The manatee received its name of sea cow from the supposed resemblance of its mouth to that of the denizen of the barnyard. Its only real resemblance, however, is that it is a mammal, suckles its young, feeds on herbage, and is gentle, but not timid.

It has a remarkably thick skin, which in former days the Seminole Indians used in making canoes and almost indestructible ropes, lariats, whips and household utensils. This skin is underlaid with about two inches of the richest kind of fat. Its bones are the hardest and densest of all mammals, while its eyes are even smaller than those of the hog.

The manatee is now exceedingly scarce in Florida, being rarely found anywhere but in the Santa Lucia River, a tributary of the Indian River, and only occasionally there. As it goes south on the approach of cold weather, it spends only the warm months in Florida, arriving about May and leaving in November. The tenderness of its meat, which is more palatable than the finest venison, has been the principal cause of its destruction. The Indians on the Amazon River consider it the greatest delicacy obtainable, and capture it extensively during its migrations up and down that river.

Owing to its shy habits in the water, and its thick, tough skin, underlaid with so much fat, it is exceedingly difficult to kill with a rifle, so the hunters resort to the use of nets. The usual method is to plant a heavy net, about three hundred or four hundred feet in length and from six to twelve feet in depth, in places which it is known to frequent. The net is never anchored, but either tied to two posts firmly set in the bottom of the river or else fastened by light strings to bushes or trees on shore, so that the least touch of a wanderer may break them and allow the net to envelop it.

A close watch is kept upon the net. Great care must be exercised, as the hearing of the animal is exceedingly keen, while its sight is very good when the smallness of its eyes is taken into consideration. False alarms are frequent and keep the hunters on the qui vive. Often an alligator in wending his noiseless way through the water gets tangled up in the net, or a huge sawfish furiously attacks the net with his sharp weapon when he feels it enfolding him, or a shark, boundera through it, biting great holes in it with his terrible teeth. A whole season frequently passes without a manatee being captured. When one is at last caught, the net is drawn ashore, where the unresisting animal is tied with cords. A corral of stakes is then built around it in water deep enough to float it at all tides, and it is then left there until its captors find a purchaser for it. While it is imprisoned it is fed on lily pads, manatee grass, cabbage leaves, bananas, or any other delectable fruit or vegetable. It may be shy for the first day or two, but after that time it becomes familiar, allows its head to be scratched and eats food out of the hand.

When shipped alive it is generally placed in a large tank, put aboard a sloop and carried to its destination. An adult manatee could be purchased some years ago for $50 or $100, but the animal is becoming so rare that even one of seven or eight feet is now worth nearly $2,000. A manatee twelve feet long and weighing fifteen hundred pounds could be sold to a circus for between $4,000 and $5,000 at least, and the skeleton of such a one would find a ready sale in most museums of natural history at $1,500.

Most of the animals die soon after being captured—not through any inherent disease, but through want of proper care and attention. One was kept alive in the Brighton (England) Aquarium for upward of sixteen months, while another was kept alive in Jacksonville, Fla., for three or four years.

The Seminole Indians formerly captured the manatee with seines and harpoons or by surrounding it as it rose near the surface. A great feast would then be held. What they did not need for their own immediate use they dried in the sun, and this they often sold to Spanish trading vessels at 50 cents a pound, the fresh meat being worth from 75 cents to $1.

After the species had been almost exterminated the legislature of Florida passed a law for its protection, and it is to be hoped that the few remaining will be allowed to live in peace.

WHEN NATURE NODS.

Nature nods undoubtedly at times, as in the case of the child born without a brain, whose case has been made public this week. Not long ago an infant was born and lived for three weeks with a hole through its heart. Thousands of us are color blind, others have no musical sense. And there are many Laura Bridgmans, many Helen Kellers. The Queen of Rumania has, or had, at her court in personal attendance upon herself the daughter of a blind nobleman. She could neither hear nor speak, and had to be taught to communicate by holding the throat of a speaker, and imitating the vibration produced by the effort. But what a grudge against nature must such a one as Lyon Playfair discovered ever feel!

Here was a girl who was blind, deaf, dumb and could neither taste nor smell. One might be pardoned for asking if such a life was worth living. Yet there was a beautiful lesson in such an existence, as the great warm heart of Playfair discovered. He sent her a pretty finger ring, and the poor mite replied in this pitifully pretty letter: "Dear Sir Lyon Playfair—Sir Lyon Playfair sent Edith ring in box. Edith thank Sir Lyon Playfair for ring. Sir Lyon Playfair come to see Edith. Goodby.—Edith." During his first visit the child had closely examined his hands, wrists, arms and face, her touch being marvellously accurate. A year later he went again to see her. At first she did not recognize him, and no one betrayed his identity. At length she turned back the cuff of his shirt and touched his wrist. Her face lit up with intense joy. "It is the Englishman who gave me the ring," she rapidly spelled out on her fingers. And in a second she had flung her little arms around his neck and was weeping with delight at the recognition.—(St. James's Gazet

GIBRALTAR PASSING.

Not the Rock, but Its Importance as a Fortress.

For nearly two hundred years, or since its capture in 1704 by the British Admiral Rooke, down to a very recent period, the rock of Gibraltar has been the synonyme for impregnability, and its possession has been thought to invest Great Britain with an absolute control over the entrance to the Mediterranean.

It dominates one of the most frequented waters in the world. From every quarter of the wide horizon which is visible from its summit the steamship tracks converge. Those coming from the East, from the ports of the Mediterranean, from China, India, Australia and the far Pacific, cross those which arrive there from England and the United States, from France and Germany, from South America and Western Africa, and every day throughout the year nearly two hundred vessels defile between the columns of Hercules and pass in sight of the gigantic fortress which stands there on guard.

Such being the case, it is no wonder that Great Britain, with its vast commerce to protect and its distant colonies and dependencies to guard, should these two centuries past have held on to the place with such a tenacious grasp, or that it should have spared nothing in its effort to improve to the uttermost the natural advantages of the position, and to make Gibraltar, in very fact, the key to the inland sea at whose entrance it is situated. The control of the Mediterranean was never so important to Great Britain as it is to-day, when the road to India and the East, which used to lie around the Cape of Good Hope, has been diverted to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, and to make sure of that control against whatever opposition may be encountered has been and is the constant solicitude of the British government.

Everything that is possible has been done, not only to render Gibraltar impregnable, but to develop its full utility as a naval base. The rock has been honeycombed with galleries and stocked to the limit with provisions and munitions of war. Immense cisterns have been built to hold the water of which the place by nature is devoid. There is a standing coal pile of 100,000 tons, and the regular strength of the garrison is 10,000 men. On the summit of the hill 200 guns of heavy calibre and modern pattern have been installed, and, as the harbor was insufficient for the present need, the British government lately undertook its extension, and is now engaged in the execution of plans, at an estimated cost of $22,000,000, which it expects to complete in about a year or eighteen months from date.

Yet a grave doubt has been raised as to the wisdom of this expenditure, and there are those who declare that the trust which is placed in Gibraltar as a naval base might, if put to the test, be disappointed. That the position dominates the entrance to the Mediterranean has ceased to be true. It did so in the days of sailing vessels, because owing to the set of the ocean currents such vessels were compelled to come close to the rock in order to get through the straits. Things are different now. From Gibraltar to Ceuta, on the African coast, is fourteen miles, and as there is plenty of deep water off Ceuta, vessels propelled by steam can traverse the narrows beyond the effective range of the British guns. The domination of the Mediterranean by the fortress is at and end. But that is not all or the worst. The experts have discovered that the port, the town, the new harbor, the barracks, everything, would be within range of heavy artillery placed on Spanish soil anywhere along the whole stretch of the bay of Algeciras at distances varying from 6,000 to 10,000 yards.

It is unnecessary to demonstrate the gravity of that circumstance. Its effect upon the military value of Gibraltar is obvious. In view of it so good an authority as Sir Charles Dilke is arguing that if Spain could be induced to exchange Ceuta for Gibraltar it would be a good bargain for Great Britain.—(Philadelphia Inquirer.

COAL FOR 371 YEARS.

It appears that there is coal in the United Kingdom to a depth of 4,000 feet, sufficient, at about the present rate of output, to suffice for 371 years, but that this period will be considerably extended, seeing that there is every probability that mining can be carried on to a depth of 7,000 feet, though at this depth there will not anything like the area of coal that there is at the former limit. It is also reasonable to expect that this period of supply may be still further extended by a more economical use of fuel, due to the establishment of central electrical supply stations and the utilization of Mond and other gas producing processes and of gas driven engines, as well as other means of obtaining a higher percentage of the heat value of the fuel.—(St. James's Gazette.