

THE ADVERTISER.

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CULTIVATE NATURAL TERRITORY.

Every industry added to a town contributes that much to its growth and development, and the more industries, the larger becomes the town, which makes all towns eager and anxious to have enterprises of various kinds established within their borders. And they should, for they are most desirable in many ways. But unfortunately it too frequently happens that in their desire to secure factories, foundries and such, indulging in air castles in many cases, they overlook what is at hand, and is really the chief and principal reason for the existence of the town and its only dependable support, which is the trade from its surrounding territory. Factories and enterprise may fail and do fail, and in these strenuous times of high finance are often closed by the trusts, but the surrounding territory is always there, its trade ever ready to go where it is most appreciated, and this territory, this trade should receive our first and best consideration and be cherished early and late.

And how shall we give it our first and best consideration? First and foremost by making the town as accessible as possible, by using every endeavor to have the best of roads leading into town from all directions. This will cost time and money, but time and money that will be well invested. If trade is to be held facilities for it must be provided. It is unreasonable to think that because a town happens to be named Lafayette and happens to be in a parish called Lafayette, that the farmers of Lafayette are going to pull through mud, overwork their teams and take up a day going from and back home which under proper circumstances should take only three or four hours, just to trade at Lafayette, when they can go elsewhere with less trouble and more convenience.

Good highways from all directions should be the first aim and object of any town. And it should not stop there. Conveniences for the accommodation of our country friends should be provided. A ladies rest room is one of them, and there are others that would suggest themselves to thoughtful hospitality.

Not alone should the adjacent territory be assiduously cultivated, but every effort should be made to extend the territory by means of railroads as far as possible. Every acre of additional trade territory added means that much in growth and substantiality.

Good roads and more railroads should be our present serious care.

Value of the Alligator.

Times-Democrat.
Some years ago there were thousands of alligators in the streams, lakes and ponds of Louisiana. The saurians, the toughness of his hide and apocryphal stories of his ferocity brought upon him the enmity of the human race, and when some enterprising manufacturer found use for his hide in the making of

the fate of the 'gator was sealed. He was shot for his hide by negro hunters, and being slow of movement and not easily alarmed by the approach of man, his destruction in large numbers was comparatively easy. Finally some student of nature who had studied the habits of the saurian closely advanced the theory that the 'gator was an important ally of the levee system because he preyed on the natural enemy of the dikes, the muskrat. As the number of alligators diminished the number of muskrats increased, and the number of muskrat holes bored through the levees increased in proportion. The theory advanced was so palpably correct that in some sections of the State it was made a misdemeanor to slaughter the alligators, and it is to be hoped that the action has come in time to preserve the species to the State.

But if the theory advanced by an unscientific but very level headed resident of the Attakapas district of this State be correct, the alligator is the friend of the human race aside from his pursuit of the destructive muskrat. This resident was discussing the navigation of the Bayou Teche and other streams in that section of the State. He called attention to the fact that the beds of these streams were gradually and surely rising, and held that the shallowing of the water could not be attributed altogether to the more extensive cultivation of the soil. Plowed soil would be swept into the streams, he admitted, and if permitted to remain would shallow the water. But he held that the primary cause of the shallowing of the bayous was the destruction of the alligators which inhabited them. He had lived on these streams for years and knew the habits of the alligator quite as well as he knew the habits of his own species. He called attention to the well-known fact that wherever there was an alligator there was deep water. Every one knows that even should an alligator make his home in a shallow puddle in the open prairie that hole will in a few brief seasons become deep. The alligator is continually stirring up the mud at the bottom of the hole and heavy rains overflow

the hole and carry this mud out. Just so are streams deepened by the saurians. They live on the bottom of the streams and continually stir up the mud, which the current carries out to the Gulf, and hence the streams are being perpetually dredged by alligator power.

There is certainly this much of truth in the theory; wherever there is an alligator in a stream there is a deep hole, caused by the stirring up of the mud by the saurian. A river filled with 'gators will have a succession of these holes proportioned to the number of the saurians, and eventually the holes will be connected and made continuous. Every person who has any knowledge of the alligator is aware of this fact, and the alligator theory of deep water is more than plausible. The close observer of facts is frequently before the student in the discovery of an important fact or the formulation of a valuable theory, and the old resident of the Attakapas may have advanced a plea for the 'gator which will cause an extension of the laws for his preservation over the entire State. There is little harm in the alligator aside from his ugliness and formidable appearance. It may be that he sometimes kills a small pig, but there is no reason to believe that the stories of attacks on human beings have any foundation in fact. There is not as much danger to human life in the alligator as there is in the gentlest breed of cattle, and avarice alone is and has been the cause of his slaughter.

The State would do well to pass laws looking to the preservation of this picturesque inhabitant of its streams, not only because he preys upon the muskrat, but also because he is a dredge provided by nature for deepening the streams of the State.

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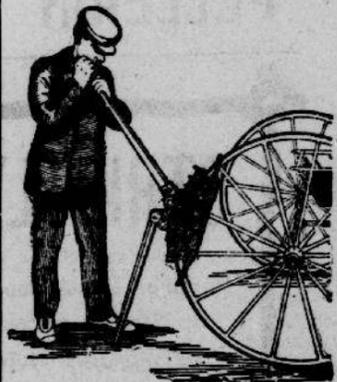
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