IN PRIMEVAL WOOD.

This deep, primeval wood—how still!
Lo, silence here makes all his own;
Veiled shapes, with hands upon their lips,
Stand round about his darkened throne.

The patient pleading of the trees—
How deep it shames the soul's despair!
In supplication moveless, mute,
They keep their attitude of prayer.

—*John Vance Cheney, in the Century.*

THE CANOE TRIP.

Old Mr. Bittleston had a charming house and grounds on the Thames, near Marlow, including a pretty little eyot. One sultry afternoon he was enjoying a placid doze in a shady arbor near the water's edge, when he was aroused by the splashing of oars, and beheld a young man in a boating costume in the act of alighting upon the lawn. Mr. Bittleston sprang to his feet in an instant, prepared to lose his temper on small provocation. He knew the stranger's errand, for he had received half a dozen promiscuous visits of this kind in the course of the day. When the young man drew near he proved to be rather a mild-looking youth who wore spectacles and seemed diffident and embarrassed.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to the proprietor of this island?" he inquired, politely lifting his straw hat from his head.

"Yes, the island belongs to me," said Mr. Bittleston, shortly.

"Will you permit me to hand you my card," said the stranger, producing a card case.

Mr. Bittleston felt somewhat mollified by the young man's polite and respectful demeanor, and he took the card. It bore the following inscription: "The Rev. Mark Avery, 14 Hayter, St. George's in-the-East."

"Oh, you are a clergyman," remarked the old gentleman, who had a good old-fashioned regard for "the cloth."

"Yes, in spite of my dress, which is decidedly anti-clerical," said the young man, smiling; "I suppose you can guess why I troubled you. We are on our way to Oxford, and I wished your permission to camp out on your island for the night with my friends."

"I'm sorry to say that I've been obliged to put a stop to that," said Mr. Bittleston; "I am afraid I cannot make an exception in your case."

"I hope you will, sir," said the parson, persuasively; "I plead not so much for myself as for my two companions. They are both very worthy young men, and this little trip, which I have organized, is a pleasure which they have never before experienced. One is a teacher at our schools, and the other is assistant in the night school. They have both earned a holiday, and I wish to do all I can to promote their enjoyment."

"You will find plenty of accommodation at Marlow, at all events," said Mr. Bittleston.

"Undoubtedly, but the fact is, we can not afford to pay for it," returned the Rev. Mark, candidly; "my companions have no money, and my own purse is, unfortunately, very narrow."

"Oh, then you are the paymaster," said the old gentleman, whose kind heart was touched by the parson's artless confession.

"Yes, it is my treat, in fact," answered the Rev. Mark, smiling; "of course, if you object to our landing on your island, we must try elsewhere. But it is a convenient spot, and I hoped—"

"Well, well, for this once I will make an exception," interrupted Mr. Bittleston, unable to resist any longer. "I must ask you to fix your camp on the most remote corner of the island and not damage the underwood."

"We will do nothing that can possibly offend you," returned the young man, offering his hand to Mr. Bittleston, who grasped it in a friendly fashion; "I am exceedingly obliged to you for your kindness."

"Don't mention it," said the old gentleman, walking by the parson's side across the lawn; "any little thing we can do for you, or supply you with, do not hesitate to ask. Have you any fresh milk? I know that it is a commodity which is generally in request."

"Thank you. We won't trespass further on your kindness," returned Rev. Mark, heartily; "we have our provisions."

"Would you and your companions come and dine at the house with me tonight?" inquired Mr. Bittleston, who was a hospitable old gentleman, and had taken rather a fancy to the young man; "my wife and daughters would be pleased."

"You are extremely kind, but the fact is my companions, though excellent young men, are not quite refined enough to sit at your table," said the Rev. Mark, cautiously lowering his voice, so that the occupants of the boat should not hear him; "for myself," he added, aloud, "I should only be too pleased, but, unfortunately, I have no clothes but these I stand up in. We are only away for the inside of a week, and must be back on Sunday."

"Never mind your clothes," said old Mr. Bittleston; "we shall be alone tonight, and my wife and daughters are accustomed to see guests in boating costume."

"In that case, I shall only be too happy," said the Rev. Mark, as he stepped into the boat; "what time do you dine?"

"At 7 you will hear the gong," answered Mr. Bittleston, from the bank, as he glanced at the young parson's companions. The latter were very unprepossessing young men, and would have been out of place in a gentleman's dining-room. On seeing them, it occurred to Mr. Bittleston that he had been a little too precipitate with his invitations, and it was partly owing to this reflection that he walked up to the house, and searched for the clergy list on reaching the house, and searched for Rev. Mr. Mark Avery's name. He found it duly recorded, and learned that the young man was curate of St. Blaise's church, one of the largest and poorest parishes in the east of London.

The parson made his appearance at dinner, and created a favorable impression. He won Mr. Bittleston's heart by taking an immense interest in the house and grounds, and insisted on being shown over them. His tales of the suffering poor of his parish, and his modest references of his own arduous life, elicited the sympathy of the ladies, and, in fact the evening passed off so well that, on his rising to leave, old Mr. Bittleston pressed him to remain a day in the neighborhood, so as to visit the church and other objects of local interest. "No, thank you, I'm afraid we must not linger," he said, shaking his host warmly by the hand; "we have our work cut out for to row to Oxford and back to town by Saturday. I must think of my companions." "Well, at all events, come and have breakfast with us to-morrow," said the old gentleman.

"We must be several stages on our road before your breakfast hour," he said, as he saluted the ladies in turn; "by the by," he added, addressing Mr. Bittleston, "there is one small favor I venture to ask of you. May I leave a portmanteau here, and fetch it on our way down Friday or Saturday?"

"Certainly," said the old gentleman, promptly.

"I find we have a good many things we shan't need, now that the weather has set in fair," he explained; "there are always some cooking utensils we can dispense with. It is desirable to lighten our boat, and by leaving the portmanteau here I have an excuse for calling on our way back."

"We shall be delighted to see you," said Mr. Bittleston; "and if you leave the portmanteau at the house to-morrow morning, it shall be taken care of."

The Rev. Mark then took his departure. Next morning the party had left when the family came down to breakfast, but the parson had entrusted the portmanteau to one of the servants. The following day he wrote a few lines to Mr. Bittleston from Reading, sending a piece of music which he had recommended one of the young ladies to get, and begging that she would accept it, as he happened to come across it in the music shop in the town. The little act of politeness excited less attention than it might otherwise have done, because the letter arrived while every one was in a great state of excitement. The discovery had just been made that a large quantity of jewelry, plate and other articles had been abstracted from a safe in Mr. Bittleston's dressing-room. The loss was so considerable that Mr. Bittleston immediately telegraphed to Scotland-yard, not caring to entrust the matter to the local police. In response a detective appeared upon the scene, and made a careful inspection of the premises. The safe was uninjured, and the lock had not been tampered with.

"It was cleverly done, but there was no magic in it," said the inspector, a sharp-eyed little man named Hardiss; "the lock is a very ordinary one and has evidently been opened with a key."

"But who could have done it? I am about the house and grounds all day, and nobody could have got in and out with out being observed," said Mr. Bittleston, in a great fluster.

"It's a case of burglary," answered the inspector. "There are no signs of a forcible entrance having been effected, but some of the windows on the ground floor have no shutters, and may have been unlocked."

"Then you don't suspect any of the servants," said Mr. Bittleston; "indeed, I can answer for them all."

"Well," said the inspector, shrugging his shoulders, "I can't express an opinion at present. Have you had any stranger in the house lately?"

"No," said Mr. Bittleston, adding, as he remembered the Rev. Mark Avery, "by-the-by, a clergyman dined here a night or two ago—a curate of a London parish. He was the only visitor the last few days."

The inspector asked no questions about the parson, but Mr. Bittleston resolved to make a journey to the east end and ascertain beyond a doubt that the Rev. Mark was the person he represented himself to be. He had no difficulty about this, and had the satisfaction of feeling upon his return, that he had not committed an indiscretion. It so happened that when he called at the Rev. Mark Avery's address, he met his friend's vicar coming out of the door. Mr. Eittleston easily ascertained that the young curate had gone on a boating expedition to Oxford with two companions, and this evidence appeared quite conclusive. He made a clumsy excuse to the vicar to account for his solicitude, and made his way home, feeling ashamed of himself.

The following evening, Inspector Hardiss called to report progress, and to ask a few further questions. Mr. Bittleston was out in the garden, and the officer joined him on the lawn.

"It's a puzzle, and that's a fact," said Hardiss, when his inquiries had been satisfied; "I've come to the conclusion it has been done by some one in the house. No stranger has been in the neighborhood, and it's downright impossible that any one could have got away with the swag without being noticed in a little place like this."

While the inspector was speaking, Mr. Bittleston's youngest daughter, a girl of fourteen, came running across the lawn. "Papa," she cried, "isn't that Mr. Avery? He is rowing stroke in that boat, and he has evidently forgotten the house, but his portmanteau is here."

"By Jove! I believe it is Avery and his friends," cried Mr. Bittleston, as the boat swept quickly past the lawn in midstream at the best pace the oarsmen could command. "Hi, you! Confound him! why can't he look round? Boat ahoy!"

But though Mr. Bittleston had good lungs, and though a broad sheet of water is an excellent conductor of sound, his voice failed to arrest the attention of the occupants of the boat, who were straining every nerve to reach the next lock. While Mr. Bittleston was still shouting, they began to disappear around the top reach, without once turning their heads.

"Silly fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Bittleston, in a state of excitement, as he hastily descended from the garden seat on which he had been standing; "he must be deaf, and blind, too! Here, Ada! quick! Tell Robert to run to my room and bring Mr. Avery's portmanteau. Lend me a hand, inspector. If we look sharp, we shall be able to catch him at the lock."

He led the way to the boat-house as he spoke, followed by the inspector. But by the time the boat was ready, and the footman had appeared with the portmanteau, several minutes had elapsed. "Here, Robert! put the portmanteau in the bow and jump in," said Mr. Bittleston, impatiently. "I want you to row me to the lock as quick as you can."

"Let me lend a hand," said Inspector Hardiss, divesting himself of his coat in a very business-like manner.

The party started down stream in pursuit, Mr. Bittleston steering, and frequently bobbing up and down in his excitement, to try and catch sight of the boat ahead. In spite of their efforts, however, they found the lock-gates closed against them, and the parson's boat out of sight. What was more tantalizing, the lock had been emptied by the time they got there, and was waiting a boat which was coming up stream. An abrupt turn in the river at a short distance already hid from view the boat just relieved from the lock.

"What a nuisance!" exclaimed Mr. Bittleston, mopping his forehead as he stood on the banks of the lock, having taken in at a glance the position of affairs. "Boat with three gentlemen just gone through, Smithers?" he asked of the lock-keeper.

"Yes, sir, but they are coming back. They pulled their boat round by the back water and went ashore, after asking me to keep an eye on it till they returned," said the man.

"Oh, that is all right," said Bittleston, in a tone of satisfaction; "we will get back, inspector, to attend to business. Hi! Bring up that portmanteau, Robert. Smithers, will you take charge of it and give it to the Rev. Mr. Avery, who is one of those three gentlemen, with my compliments?"

"I think you mentioned my name, sir," said a voice from the lock, proceeding from one of the occupants of a boat which had just entered.

"Not that I am aware of," said Mr. Bittleston politely; "the gentleman I referred to was the Rev. Mark Avery."

"I am the Rev. Mark Avery," said the stranger promptly.

"The gentleman that I mean is the curate of St. Blaises' church in St. George's-in-the-East," said Mr. Bittleston, feeling confused.

"Then there is no doubt whatever that you mean me," returned the stranger, with a laugh in which his companion joined.

Mr. Bittleston started, and stared at the young man, who bore his gaze unflinchingly. This Mark Avery was a tall, powerful, black-whiskered young fellow, totally different in appearance from the slim, modest, retiring youth who claimed the same appellation. It crossed Mr. Bittleston's mind that the party in the lock were having a joke at his expense, and he was about to resent the impertinence in very forcible language, when the inspector, who had been standing by, touched him on the arm.

"That is Mr. Avery, sure enough, said the officer; "I've seen him before. That being so, I think we had better see what is inside the portmanteau. It's precious heavy," he added, seizing hold of it with sudden interest.

Mr. Bittleson was too much nonplussed to interfere, beside which he began to entertain disquieting suspicions. The inspector proceeded with great dexterity to unfasten the straps of the portmanteau, and in the twinkling of an eye had mastered the lock with a large stone. Upon his opening the lid, an excited exclamation burst from the bystanders, for the contents of the portmanteau proved to be the whole of the articles of silver and jewelry which had been stolen from Mr. Bittleston's safe.

"Hanged if I didn't think this was it," ejaculated the inspector; "you put me off the scent, by leading me to believe that the parson who dined with you was an old friend. You never told me you had entertained a stranger who had left his baggage, or I should not have wasted the last day or two."

"I had no idea that—that the young man was a swindler," murmured Mr. Bittleston, apologetically.

"I can see the game as clear as daylight," said the inspector; "having reconnoitred the premises, he and his pals do the job neatly in the night. He knows the difficulty of getting away with the swag, and thinks he may be stopped and searched by the police, in consequence of having been to the house the day before the robbery. So he left the things with you, and meanwhile he has made every arrangement to dispose of 'em."

"How fortunate! How miraculous!" exclaimed the old gentleman, beginning to realize his good fortune; "but how was it he didn't claim the portmanteau, after all?"

"I rather fancy he caught sight of me on your lawn, and sheered off," said the inspector, in high humor; "this is about the meaning of it, and what is more, I can make a very good guess at who it is. I shall not wait for him, because I shall not come back, but I think in the course of a day or two I shall lay my hands on him and his pals too." And he did.

AMONG THE ALLIGATORS.

A NATIVE FLORIDIAN'S ACCOUNT OF THE REPTILES.

Their Habits, and How They are Hunted for Their Skins—The Experience of a Green Hand.

"So, it's a crocodile," said a tall, light-haired man hailing from Miami, Fla., gazing curiously at the skin of a long, sharp-nosed reptile he had brought in and comparing it with the broad head of an alligator. "We call 'em 'long-nosed 'gaters' down our section, but now I come to look, they do seem kinder different from a regular 'gater, and, come to think of it," continued the speaker, who was a professional alligator-hunter, "I've seen 'em do things ye wouldn't look for in a regular 'gater. They sticks close in shore, where there's plenty of mud to wallow in and hide, but these long-nosed cusses—why, I've seen 'em three miles out to sea fishin' on the reef as regular as you please. One was seen as fur down the reef as Branscom light. I dropped in there one day to see the keeper, an old mate of mine, an' he had one of these yere long-nosed 'gaters hangin' on a peg. 'Shoot 'em on the wing?' says I, intendin' to be joking, as it were. 'No,' says he, 'but they swims out yere once in a while, an' that's about as remarkable.' He said he he'd seen a heap of 'em sence he'd been thar, a-nosin' around on the beech and reef after fish and crawfish and one day I was a-bowlin' along jest inside the reef, when I see one myself as long as the boat. Yes, it was one o' them long-nosed chaps; yer can't be mistaken on account of their showin' their teeth when the mouths is shut. There's heaps of 'em in County Dade, but I never knew they was crocodiles afore. Yes," continued the cracker, "I foller 'gater-huntin' fur a business. Does it pay? Well, I don't look like a man ter foller a losin' trade, do I? I've got more orders on hand than I kin fill in a year. That looks like prosperity, and it is, if the 'gaters will only hold out. I've been a-killin' of 'em now, off an' on, for four years, and thar's heaps o' folks after 'em beside me. Why, I kin remember when alligators could be cotched at Fernand'na, right in the swamp between there and old town, but you'd have to scrape lively to find one now on the St. Johns anywhere within fifty miles of the sea. There are all bein' druv off. If you want to get 'em easy and plenty, the only way to do is to go down into Lake Okeechobee, and thar the alligators, moccasins, leeches and mosquitoes are so dog-gonned thick yo' can't breathe without suckin' some of 'em in, an' I'm a-drawin' it mild, too. I git all I want though, at New River an' down that way, too, we don't do any shootin' at night; some do up the river, but I kin get all I kin skin in the daytime. It takes some experience in shootin', as a ball put in the wrong place spoils the hide. The place to put it is in the eye, an' I reckon I kin do it about every time as fur as I kin see the critter. You soon git the hang of it. That way generally stuns or kills the critter right off, but if you break a leg or wound it, it's good-bye, sure."

"How many skins do you get in a season?" asked the *Enquirer* writer, who was a listener.

"That depends," was the reply. "Last year I soaked down about twenty-five hundred with one gang of men, and in all I reckon about five thousand. If I sold em untanned they'd average about a dollar apiece, but tanned they sell much higher, and that's what I'm up North fur. As the business now stands the tanner gits all the cash, and we do all the work. I'm going to do my own tanning now, and expect to carry back all the fixin's.

"No, there ain't no special fun in shootin' 'gaters. It's all right if you can float down the river in a steamer, and have a servant to hand out your gun and another to fan you, like I see an English swell on the St. Johns, but when it comes to wadin' in mud up to your neck, fightin' chills, leeches and sich, there ain't much romance I kin tell ye. It's hard work, and will kill a white man. Injuns is the only folks that kin stand life in the swamps and glades.

"Alligators ain't such fools as folks think," continued the hunter; "they hev a heap sense salted down one way or another. I've seen 'em shot and taken into a boat kinder stunned-like, an' all of a sudden lit out, with their tail knocking all hands into the water and fillin' the boat, and the critter was only twelve feet long at that. You kin imagine what a twenty-foot one could do.

"You take a wild alligator and he's got more curiosity than an old maid in a one-horse town. When I fust struck Lake Okeechobee the 'gators were thick, and never thought of moving out of the way, and, instead of that, they would follow the boat in regular droves. At first I thought they were after me, but when the canoe stopped they stopped, and kind of drew round just as if I was some sort of curiosity. You didn't have to hunt much there, they hunted you, and stood around waiting to be shot as agreeable as you please.

"You know," continued the hunter, "that the gator's stronghold is his tail, and when they want to go for anything on land they make a whack at it sideways, open their mouths and turn their heads in the same direction, and if the game is small it's liable to be knocked right down their throat.

"Anybody what has had any experience with alligators kin keep out of the way, but a green hand generally gets fooled on the start. I had a Western man with me last season, and about the first 'gator he saw nearly cleaned him out. He saw the critter asleep on the bank, and thought he could creep upon him and put him out with a club. The boys didn't let on, and in a minute he was within two foot of the critter, and then there come a kind of a scrapin, an' we see that man right in the air, his feet up, and he a goin' round like a windmill in a gale o' wind, an' when he landed he didn't know where he was. Ye see the gator's tail had struck him right alongside o' the shins, and knocked his legs from under him. He didn't fool round any more 'gators at short range, I kin tell you."—*Cincinnati Enquirer.*

Queer Things in New Zealand.

Moncure D. Conway, writes as follows from New Zealand to the Philadelphia *Times*: The queerest thing I have seen out here is the so-called "bulrush caterpillar," or "vegetable caterpillar." This is also found in New Zealand, where the natives name it "Aweto Hotete," but I have two specimens found in Tasmania. The plant is a fungus, a sphæria, which grows seven or eight inches above the ground, generally in a single stem, round, and curving at the end like a serpent. This end is thickly covered with brown seed for some three inches. It grows near the root of a particular tree, the "rata." When pulled up its single root is found to consist of a large caterpillar three inches long, which, when dissected, is found to be solid wood. Every detail of this grub is preserved. The sphæria always grows out of the nape of the neck. It is supposed that when this grub (that of the large moth) burrows in the ground, one of the seeds get between the scales of the neck, strikes root, and completely turns the interior of the creature into its own substance. Only the shell is left intact, no smallest rootlet appearing anywhere. The aborigines also eat this pure white grub, and a friend tells me that, taken raw, it is delicious. The New Zealanders also burn the caterpillar-root and run it into their tattoo wounds. A good many white people, it is said, believe that the plant actually develops the caterpillar form, and if this be true, we cannot laugh much at those who believed in the vegetable Scythian Lamb and the Mandrake Man, of which specimens are preserved in the Surgeons' museum at London. The multiplication of rats in these far-off towns (they are not found in the bush, though mice swarm there) is such as to incline one to Mr. Walter Besaut's belief in Whittington's cat. Any sensible islander would pay much to be rid of such pests. I was unwise enough to bring a wicker trunk, and on the Pacific steamer the rats entered it and devoured the nice soft parts of my boots. With their usual daintiness they preferred patent leather. In Hobart I was at Sunday supper in a gentleman's house, when suddenly the ladies began to climb on their chairs in an astonishing way, and the young men to rush about with poker and tongs. They had not thought it necessary to explain that a rat had entered the room, which was in the second story. It was not an uncommon occurrence, and a gentleman present said it was one of his amusements to shoot rats in his bath-room with a pistol.

"California."

The origin of many of the names given to old cities and countries has been lost in the midst of antiquity, and doubt is already thrown upon some of those of modern times, says a California letter to the New York *Evening Post*. The city of San Francisco derives its present name from the bay on which it is situated, but the first, and well-nigh forgotten one, was Yerbabuena, as it was called by the Mexicans before the inroads of our adventurous countrymen, who could see no reason for maintaining it when they looked about on the sand dunes, and found scarcely a blade of good grass. But they were mistaken in the meaning of the word. Yerbabuena signifies peppermint, an herb to which Mexican women attach a special importance in their domestic economy. Thus, in the future, when this fact becomes more widely known, other nicknamed towns may retort upon San Francisco, by fastening upon it the name of Peppermint city. As to the State of California, a majority of the people seem to fancy that it is so called from a combination that denotes something that is beautiful. An eminent authority (Webster) goes still further out of the way when he supposes the first syllable to be derived from Caliph, implying very indirectly that the country is a sort of Mohammedan paradise. Throwing the Greek and Arabic theories aside as unworthy of consideration, we find the truth in an old manuscript in the archives of the church at Santa Barbara, written by Juan Rodriguez de Cabrillo, one of the early explorers, who, in 1542, followed the coast up further than Cortez did seven years before. Cabrillo says: "Cortez and his companions, struck by the difference between the dry and burning heat they experienced, compared with the moist and less oppressive heat of the Mexican tierra caliente, first gave to a bay, and afterward to the country, the name of Tierra California, derived from Calida Fornax, signifying fiery furnace." What bay it was does not appear, but presumably it was La Paz, near Cape St. Lucas, as Cortez discovered only the barren peninsula of Lower California, along the western coast of which there are no harbors, and he must have landed at the extreme southern point. Had he progressed as far as Santa Barbara, or even not beyond San Diego, he would have found some more appropriate name for the lovely land which is so unjustly burdened with a misnomer.

In the Northwest pineries two-horse teamsters get $30 per month; four-horse teamsters, $45; ox teamsters, $35; choppers, $40; cooks, $50; sawers, $40; swampers, $40.

Senator Morrill, of Vermont, has served nearly thirty years in Congress, six terms in the House and three in the Senate. He is seventy-five years old.