

## Out in Nor'wester

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Frank was roused from sleep by the bright rays of the morning sun shining full in his face. He awoke Will, and both boys looked about in wonder. They were upon a shell island almost completely encircled by mangroves. Their boat had been driven to the shore at the one spot where the shell formation touched the water. They realized that this must be one of the ancient shell mounds, famous as the work of by-gone Indian races, of which they had heard so much. Before investigating it, they turned to look at their boat. There below them she lay, half filled with water, her rudder gone and her stern wrecked beyond any hope of present repair.

"Well," said Will, "the only wonder is that we are here at all. If that big wave had been a little bit smaller we should not be here as we are. As it was we jumped that reef almost clear, just grazing its edge. But don't you feel hungry, Frank?"

"Hungry," said Frank, "why, I could almost eat those mangroves there!"

"Well, we may be reduced to that diet before we get out of here, but let's take a look into that old shack up there before we take up with your suggestion."

Climbing the low hill, they found the shack, old and dilapidated, with no indication of recent inhabitants.

Near the shack was a cistern of fairly good water, so that no uneasiness need be felt on that score.

The position of the shack was sufficiently elevated so that they could see the entire cleared space of the mound, which consisted of three or four acres rankly overgrown with morning-glories and other weeds, and containing perhaps a dozen trees, mostly lemons, the trees hanging full of fruit, but also two or three oranges, likewise luscious with fruit.

"Here goes for some oranges," said Frank, and they started for the nearest tree, where they picked as many as they could carry and lost no time in eating them.

"Those oranges tasted good," observed Frank, "but I believe I still feel hungry. Was there anything to eat in the boat?"

"Nothing but fish bait," replied Will.

"Well, I suggest that we search the island from end to end for food," said Frank, and to this his companion agreed.

After a thorough investigation of the island's food resources, they determined that the staples were lemons, oranges "coon" oysters and fish, but as they had no way of cooking the fish, that item could be eliminated.

"I'm afraid your desire to eat mangroves will be gratified before long," said Will.

"I think some raw oysters with lemon juice will do for the present," said Frank.

"Come on." And he started for the fringe of mangroves where huge bunches of "coon" oysters hung on the aerial roots of those trees.

Fortunately the boys had their pocket-knives with them, so that they were able to cut down large bunches of oysters, and also had an implement with which to open them. They worked industriously at this for about an hour, when Will declared that the energy involved in getting the oysters, was out of proportion to the oysters themselves. But Frank suggested that as they had to expend energy anyway, a baby oyster was better than no oyster at all, and said, "I never tasted a sweeter oyster."

"Nor a smaller," Will replied.

"Listen," said Will. "I hear a launch" And sure enough, the distant throbbing of a launch could be distinctly made out. They listen with bated breath as the sound grows louder, but no launch comes in sight, and soon the throbbing sound grows fainter and is lost in the distance.

"That means oranges and oysters for dinner," said Frank. "Now if we only had a gun we might shoot some of those teal in the pond over there."

"Yes, and if we only had matches we might have a fire with which to cook them."

That night, after supping on the staples of the island, they went to bed in the shack to dream of hotel menus.

Next morning they awoke early and hungry.

"Will you have fruit for breakfast?" asked Frank.

"No thank you," said Will, "my physician advises me to eat sparingly early in the day."

The oranges had begun to pall, and even the oysters tasted somewhat flat.

"Hallo!" shouted Will, "there's a boat passing by!" And he ran to the beach calling out and waving his arms. In a few minutes a good-sized skiff pulled by a brawny, kindly faced native, grated on the shell. He was amazed when he heard the boys' story, and his first comment on it was to build a fire and cook a good square meal for the all but famished boys. He told them that they were on a key formerly occupied by "Old Man Gomez." "It's a healthy location," he said. "The old man was drowned not many miles from here at 121 years of age." Next he offered to take the boys to Marco, where he was going, and where they could take the boat for Naples.

On arriving at Marco they learned that searching parties had been sent out, but that now their friends at Naples had about given them up for lost. One can easily imagine the happiness of all concerned when the boys appeared at Naples safe and sound.

## Agriculture

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in some counties, is a dead line, preventing immigration of good citizens who desire to establish homes.

Putnam County, it would seem, is also agitating the subject. A Palatka Times-Herald correspondent argues that the present stock law alone is sufficient to deter every intelligent person from entering our borders as a permanent settler. The pig has the right of way with the cow against all newcomers.

The writer of this article can cite a case in point, from personal knowledge. Coming to Florida in 1892 he settled in a sparsely populated township in De Soto County, purchased an hundred or so acres in a section that had no permanent, but many transient inhabitants; these latter were the four-legged kind of animals. One day there came along a party of men on horseback who notified him that he was on land that they used as pasture for cattle and "haws," and warned him to leave. They also stuck up a written notice on several pine trees on the section to the effect that they had occupied the land "between the lakes" for years as a common range, and that they proposed to hold it.

Mind you, this entire section had been purchased in part, and on an option, and the new-comer was on his own land. Every one of these men was a trespasser, and each had a gun in his hip pocket to enforce his view of the subject.

But the new settler stuck, and is on his land to-day. True, he has had to spend a lot of money he could illly afford, to run a seven-wire hog-proof fence around a few acres of his home place, and keep careful watch over his pasture patch to keep out cattle that have no respect for fence wire.

Do you suppose this person would have settled in Florida had he known that such was the condition of affairs? Do you suppose that Florida is likely to get the settlers it wants while such laws as now protect cattle and hog owners to the detriment of settlers who desire to build up homes are on our statute books? And yet as the Herald correspondent says: "Our intelligent legislators would all fall into fits if an act should be presented to them to modify the law. At the same time they can cry for immigration! \* \* \* Florida is in no condition to invite immigration, and won't be for many years to come."

These adverse conditions must be changed. How long will it take for the leaven of Northern intelligence now in and coming, to leaven the lump of native legislative indifference? The truth does not appear on the surface of the optimistic literature scattered abroad outside the State by those interested in selling its lands, and after a man is pinned down by his title papers (that sometimes are fraudulent and of no value) he stays as he best may through pride or inability to get away.

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