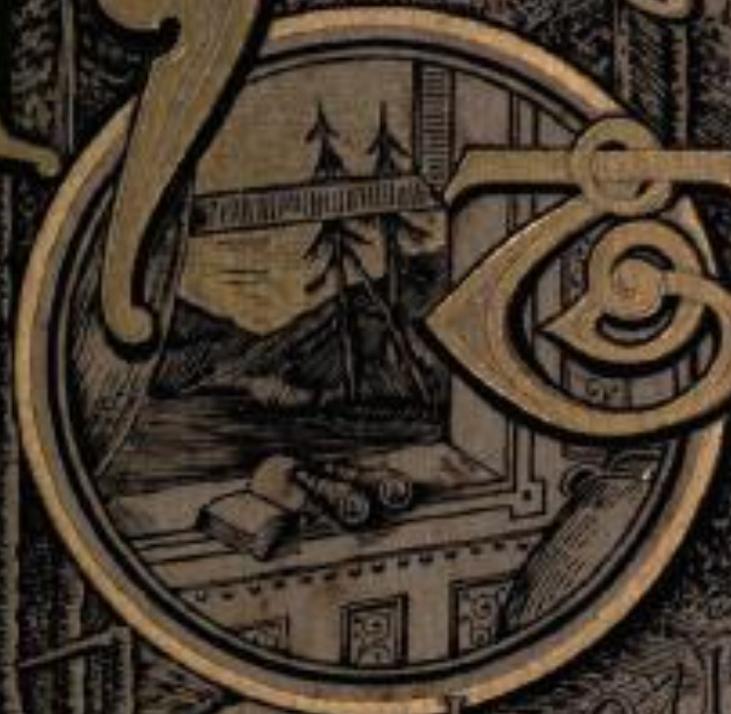


HERE AND THERE

A circular vignette is positioned in the center of the page. It depicts a landscape scene. In the foreground, there is a wooden platform or stage with a large log lying on it. In the middle ground, a tent is pitched on the left, and a building with a porch is on the right. A bridge spans across a body of water in the background. The scene is framed by a circular border.

IN OUR OWN
COUNTRY

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES TOWNSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science Volume 26, September, 1880

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EKONIAH SCRUB: AMONG FLORIDA LAKES

[Townsend apparently misspelled the word Etoniah]



"And if you do get lost after that, it's no great matter," said the county clerk, folding up his map, "for then all you've got to do is to find William Townsend and inquire."

He had been giving us the itinerary for our "cross-country" journey, by way of the Lakes, to Ekoniah Scrub. How many of all the Florida tourists know where that is? I wonder. Or even what it is--the strange amphibious land which goes on from year to year "developing"--the solid ground into marshy "parrairas," the

prairies into lakes, bright, sparkling sapphires which Nature is threading, one by one, year by year, upon her emerald chaplet of forest borderland? How many of them all have guessed that close at hand, hidden away amid the shadows of the scrub-oaks, lies her laboratory, where any day they may steal in upon her at her work and catch a world a-making?

There are three individuals who know a little more about it now than they did a few weeks

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

since--three, or shall we not rather say four? For who shall say that Barney gained less from the excursion than the Artist, the Scribe and the Small Boy who were his fellow-travellers? That Barney became a party to the expedition in the character, so to speak, of a lay-brother, expected to perform the servile labor of the establishment while his superiors were worshipping at Nature's shrines, in nowise detracted from his improvement of the bright spring holiday. It was, indeed, upon the Small Boy who beat the mule, rather than upon the mule that drew the wagon, that the fatigues of the expedition fell. "He just glimpses around at me with his old eyeball," says the Small Boy, exasperate, throwing away his broken cudgel, "and that's all the good it does."

We knew nothing more of Ekoniah when we set out upon our journey than that it was the old home of an Indian tribe in the long-ago days before primeval forest had given place to the second growth of "scrub," and that it was a region unknown to the Northern tourist. It lies to the south-west of Magnolia, our point of departure on the St. John's River, but at first our route lay westerly, that it might include the lake-country of the Ridge.

"It's a pretty kentry," said a friendly "Cracker," of whom, despite the county clerk's itinerary, we were fain to ask the way within two hours after starting--"a right pretty kentry, but it's all alike. You'll be tired of it afore you're done gone halfway."

Is he blind, our friend the Cracker? Already, in the very outset of our journey, we have beheld such varied beauties as have steeped our souls in joy. After weeks of rainless weather the morning had been showery, and on our setting forth at noon we had found the world new

washed and decked for our coming. Birds were singing, rainbows glancing, in quivering, water-laden trees; flowers were shimmering in the sunshine; the young growth was springing up glorious from the blackness of desolating winter fires. Such tender tones of pink and gray! such fiery-hearted reds and browns and olive-greens! such misty vagueness in the shadows! such brilliance in the sunlight that melted through the openings of the woods! "All alike," indeed! No "accidents" of rock or hill are here, but oh the grandeur of those far-sweeping curves of undulating surface! the mystery of those endless aisles of solemn-whispering pines! the glory of color, intense and fiery, which breathes into every object a throbbing, living soul!

For hours we journeyed through the forest, always in the centre of a vast circle of scattered pines, upon the outer edge of which the trees grew dense and dark, stretching away into infinity. Our road wandered in and out among the prostrate victims of many a summer tempest: now we were winding around dark "bays" of sweet-gum and magnolia; now skirting circular ponds of delicate young cypress; now crossing narrow "branches" sunk deep in impenetrable "hummocks" of close-crowded oak and ash and maple, thick-matted with vines and undergrowth; now pausing to gather orchids and pitcher-plants and sun-kisses and andromeda; now fording the broad bend of Peter's Creek where it flows, sapphire in the sunshine, out from the moss-draped live-oaks between high banks of red and yellow clays and soft gray sand, to lose itself in a tangle of flowering shrubs; now losing and finding our way among the intricate cross-roads that lead by Bradley's Creek and Darbin Savage's tramway and the "new-blazed road" of the county clerk's itinerary. Suddenly the sky grew dark: thunder began to roll, and--were we in

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES TOWNSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

the right road? It seemed suspiciously well travelled, for now we called to mind that Middleburg was nigh at hand, and thither we had been warned not to go.

There was a house in the distance, the second we had seen since leaving the "settle_ments_" near the river. And there we learned that we were right and wrong: it was the Middleburg

road. After receiving sundry lucid directions respecting a "blind road" and an "old field," we turned away. How dark it was growing! how weirdly soughed the wind among the pine tops! how bodingly the thunder growled afar! There came a great slow drop: another, and suddenly, with swiftly-rushing sound, the rain was upon us, drenching us all at once before waterproofs and umbrellas could be made available.



It was then that Barney showed the greatness of his soul. In the confusion of the moment we had run afoul of a stout young oak, which obstinately menaced the integrity of our axle. It was only possible to back out of the predicament, but Barney scorned the thought of retreat. Not all the blandishments of the Small Boy, whether brought to bear in the form of entreaties, remonstrances, jerks or threats, availed: Barney stood unmoved, and the

hatchet was our only resource. How that mule's eye twinkled as from time to time he cast a backward glance upon the Small Boy wrestling with a dull hatchet and a sturdy young scrub-oak under the pelting rain, amid lightning-flash and thunder-peal, needs a more graphic pen than mine to describe. A better-drenched biped than climbed into the wagon at the close of this episode, or a more thoroughly-satisfied

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

quadruped than jogged along before him, it would be difficult to find.

As suddenly as they had come up the clouds rolled away, and sunlight flamed out from the west--so suddenly that it caught the rain halfway and filled the air with tremulous rainbow hues. Then burst out afresh the songs of birds, sweet scents thrilled up from flower and shrub, the very earth was fragrant, and fresh, resinous odors exhaled from every tree. The sun sank down in gold and purple glory and night swept over the dark woods. Myriad fireflies flitted round, insects chirped in every hollow, the whippoorwill called from the distant thicket, the night-hawk circled in the open glade. A cheerful sound of cow-bells broke the noisy stillness, the forest opened upon a row of dark buildings and darker orange trees, and barking of dogs and kindly voices told us that rest was at hand.

No words can do justice to the hospitality of Floridians, whether native or foreign. We were now to begin an experience which was to last us through our entire journey. Here we were, a wandering company of who-knows-what, arriving hungry, drenched and unexpected long after the supper-hour, and our mere appearance was the "open sesame" to all the treasures of house and barn. Not knowing what our hap might be, we had gone provided with blankets and food, but both proved to be superfluous wherever we could find a house. Bad might be the best it afforded, but the best was at our service. At K----'s [Kellums, perhaps] Ferry it was decidedly not bad. Abundance reigned there, though in a quaint old fashion, and very soon after our arrival we were warming and drying ourselves before a cheerful fire, while from the kitchen came most

heartening sounds and smells, as of fizzling ham and bubbling coffee.

Never was seen a prettier place than this as we beheld it by the morrow's light. The house stands on a high bluff, worthy the name of hill, which slopes steeply but greenly down to the South Prong of Black Creek, better deserving the name of river than many a stream which boasts the designation. We crossed it upon a boom, pausing midway in sudden astonishment at the lovely view. A long reach of exquisitely pure water, bordered by the dense overhanging foliage of its high banks, stretched away to where, a mile below us, a sudden bend hid its lower course from view, and on the high green bluff which closed the vista were seen the white house and venerable overarching trees of some old estate. The morning air was crisp and pure; every leaf and twig stood out with clean-cut distinctness, to be mirrored with startling clearness in the stream; the sky was cloudless: no greater contrast could be imagined from the tender sweetness of yesterday. The birds, exhilarated by the sparkle in the air, sang with a rollicking abandonment quite contagious: the very kids and goats on the crags above the road caught the infection and frisked about, tinkling their bells and joining most unmelodiously in the song; while Barney, crossing the creek upon a flatboat, lifted up a tuneful voice in the chorus.

We turned aside from our route to visit Whitesville, the beautiful old home of Judge B---. [no doubt Buddington] It is a noble great mansion, with broad double doors opening from every side of a wide hall, and standing in the midst of a wild garden luxuriant with flowers and shrubs and vines, and with a magnificent ivy climbing to the top of a tall blasted tree at the gate. "I came to this place

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES
TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

from New Haven in '29," its owner told us--
"sailed from New York to Darien, Georgia, in a
sloop, and from there in a sail-boat to this very
spot. I prospected all about: bought a little
pony, and rode him--well, five thousand miles
after I began to keep count. Finally, I came back
and settled here."

"Were you never troubled by Indians?" we
asked.

"Well, they put a fort here in the Indian war, the
government did--right here, where you see the
china trees." It was a beautiful green slope
beside the house, with five great pride-of-Indias
in a row and a glimpse of the creek through the
thickets at the foot. "There never was any
engagement here, though. The Indians had a
camp over there at K----'s, where you came
from, but they all went away to the Nation after
a while."

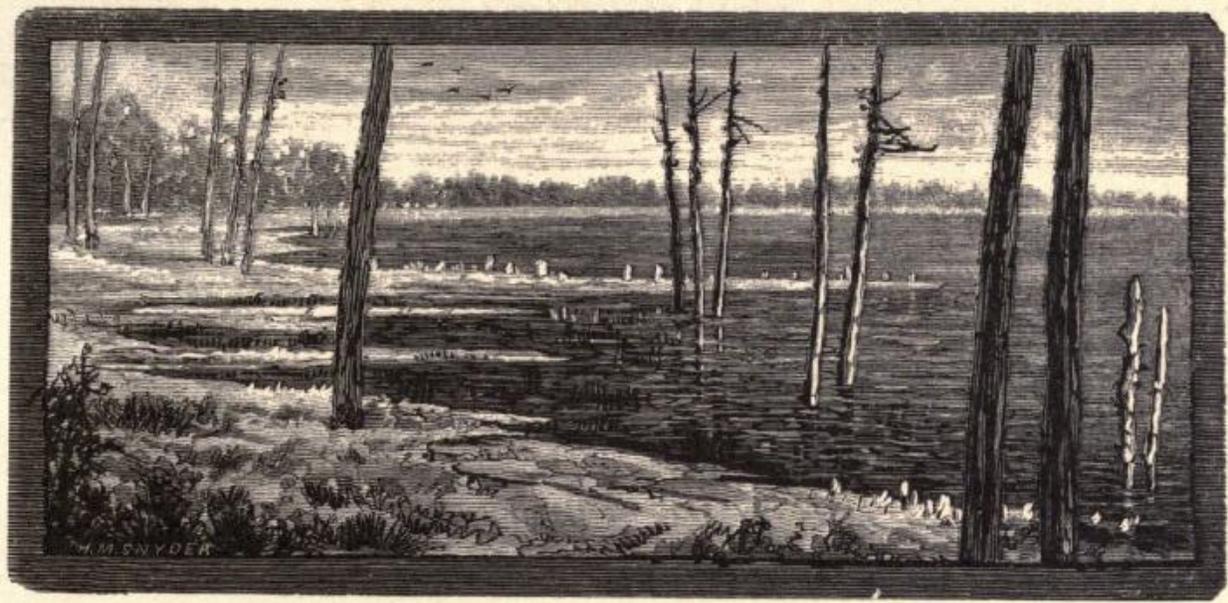
"Did you stay here through the civil war?"

"Oh yes. I never took any part in the troubles,
but the folks all suspected and watched me.
They knew I was a Union man. One day a
Federal regiment came along and wanted to
buy corn and fodder. The men drew up on the
green, and the colonel rode up to the door.
'Colonel,' says I, 'I can't _sell_ you anything, but
I believe the keys are in the corn-barn and
stable doors: I can't hinder your taking anything
by force.' He understood, and took pretty well
what he wanted. Afterward he came and urged
me to take a voucher, but I wouldn't do that. By
and by the Confederates came around and
accused me of selling to the Federals, but they
couldn't prove anything against me."

"There used to be Confederate head-quarters
up there at K----'s?" we asked.

"Oh yes, and the Federals had it too. General
Birney was there for a while. One day, just after
he came, a lot of 'em came over here. One of
my boys was lying very sick in that front
chamber just then--the one you know, the
county clerk. Well, an orderly rode up to the
door and called out, 'Here, you damned old
rebel, the general wants you.'--'I don't answer
to that name,' said I.--'You don't?'--'No, I don't.'--
-'What! ain't you a rebel?'--'I don't answer to
that name,' said I.--'Well, consider yourself my
prisoner,' says he; so I walked up there with
him. Judge Price was at head-quarters just then,
and he knew me well. It seems that the general
had heard that I kept a regular rebel
commissariat, sending stores to them secretly.
Well, when the judge had told him who I was,
the general wrote me a pass at once, and then
asked, 'Is there anything I can do for you?'--
'General,' said I, 'my son lies very sick. I should
like to see the last of him, and beg to be
permitted to retire.'--'Is that so?' said the
general. 'Would you like me to send you a
doctor?' I accepted, and he sent me two. He
came up afterward, and found that his men had
torn down the fences, broken open the store
and dragged out goods, set the oil and molasses
running, and done great damage--about four
thousand dollars' worth, we estimated. You see,
they thought it was a rebel commissariat. When
he came into the house he asked my wife if she
could give him supper. 'General,' said she, 'you
have taken away my cooks: if you will send for
your own, I shall be very happy to get supper
for you.' He did so, and spent the night here,
sleeping in one of the chambers while his
officers lay all over the piazzas. Next day they all
rode away, quite satisfied, I guess. There were
several skirmishes about here afterward, and
we have some pieces of bombs in the house
now that fell in the yard."

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES
TOWNSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON



LAKE BEDFORD.

The judge pressed us to stay and dine, but we had arranged for a gypsy dinner in the woods and were anxious to push on. Push on! How Barney would smile could he hear the word! He never did anything half so energetic as to push: he did not even pull.

So we bade farewell to our genial host and started westwardly again. We were now upon the high land of the Ridge, the backbone of the State, and though, perhaps, hardly ninety feet above the sea, the air had all the exhilarating freshness of great altitudes. All through the week which followed we felt its tonic inspiration and seemed to drink in intoxicating draughts of health and spirits, and never more than during the fifteen-mile drive between Black Creek and Kingsley's Pond.

Kingsley's Pond, the highest body of water in the State, is the first of a long succession of lakes which, lying between the St. John's and the railway, have only lately been, as it were, discovered by the Northerner. It is perfectly circular in form, being precisely two miles

across in every direction. Like all the lakes of Florida, it is of immense depth, and its waters are so transparent that the white sand at the bottom may be seen glistening like stars. In common with the other waters of this region, it is surrounded by a hard beach of white sand, rising gradually up to a beautifully-wooded slope, being quite free from the marshes which too often render the lakes of Florida unapproachable.

One of the Northern colonies which within the last two years have discovered this delightful region has settled on the shores of Kingsley's Pond. Although an infant of only twenty months, the village has made excellent growth and gives promise of a bright future. Farming is not largely followed, the principal industry of these and the other Northern colonists being orange-culture--a business to which the climate is wonderfully propitious, the dry, pure air of this district being alike free from excessive summer heats and from the frosts which are occasionally disastrous to groves situated on lower ground in the same latitude.

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

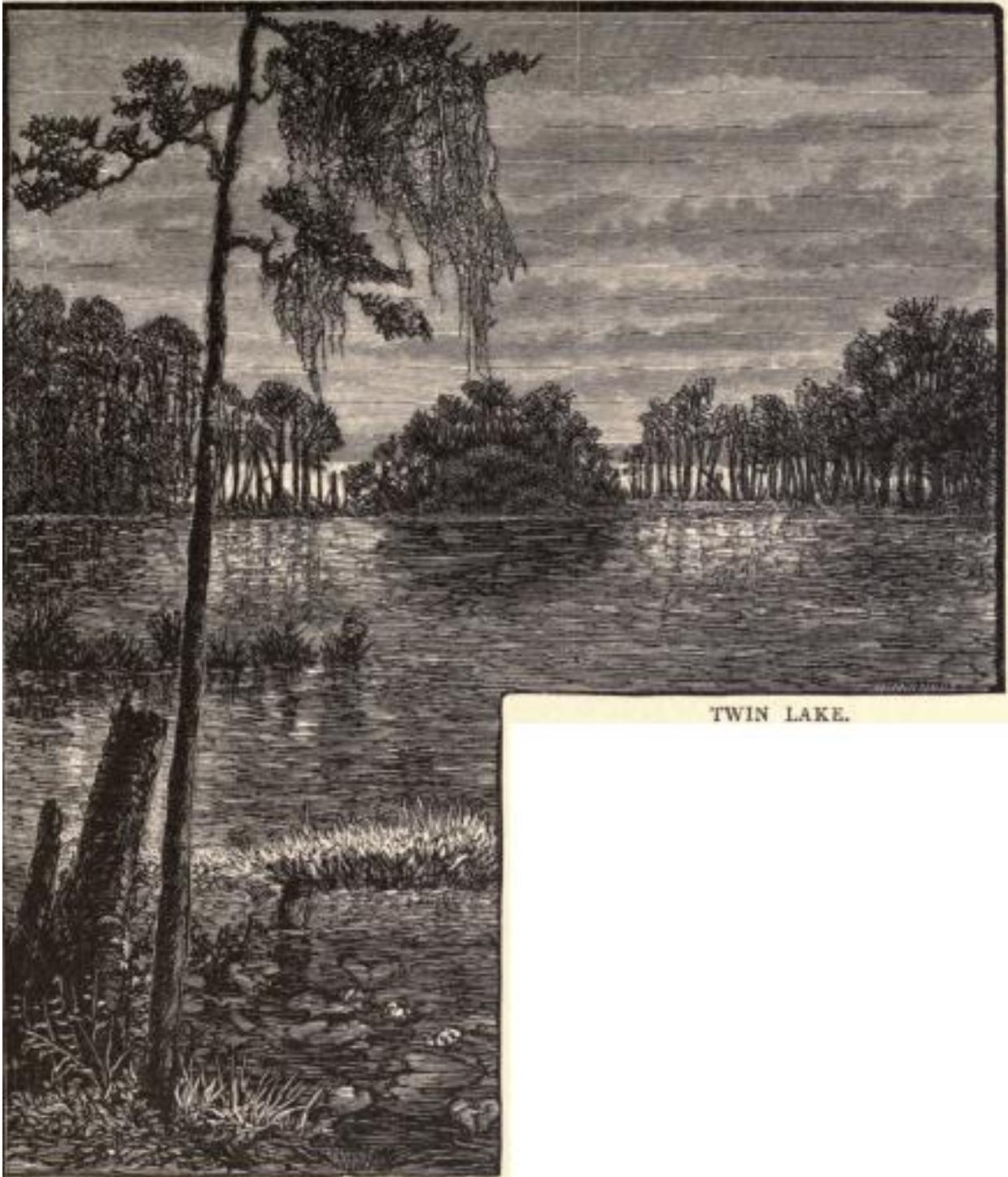
Though there are few native Floridians in this part of the country, the neighborhood of the lake rejoices in the possession of a Cracker doctress of wondrous powers. Who but her knows that chapter in the book of Daniel the reading of which stays the flowing of blood, or that other chapter potent to extinguish forest-fires? One does not need a long residence in the State to learn to appreciate the good-fortune of the Lakers in this particular.

Not far from the village, on the western shore of the pond, lives the one "old settler." He met us with the hearty welcome which we had learned almost to look for as a right, and sitting on his front piazza in the shade of his orange trees, gladdening our eyes with the view of his vine-embowered pigpen, we listened to the legend of the pond:

"Yes, I've lived yere four-and-twenty year, but I done kim to Floridy nigh on forty year ago: walked yere from Georgy to jine the Injun war. I done found this place a-scoutin' about, and when I got married I kim yere to settle. The Yankee folks wants to change the name o' the pond to Summit Lake and one thing or 'nother, but I allays votes square agin it every time, and allays will. You see, hit don't ought to be changed. I don't mind the _pond_ part: they mought call it lake ef they think it sounds better, but Kingsley's it _has_ to be. K-i-n-g-l-e-y: that, I take it, is the prompt way to spell the name of the man as named it, and that's the name it has to have. You see hit was this a-way: Kingsley were a mail-rider--leastways, express--

in the _old_ Injun wartime, I dunno how long ago. They was a fort on the pond them days, over on the south side. Wal, Kingsley were a-comin' down toward the fort from the no'th when he thort he see an Injun. He looked behind, and, sure enough, there they was, a-closin' in on him. He looked ahead agin. Shore's you're bo'hn there was a double row on 'em--better'n a hunderd--on all two sides of the trail. He hadn't a minit to study, and jist one thing to do, and he done hit. He jist clapped spurs to his critter and made for the pond. He knowed what they wanted of him"--confidentially and solemnly: "it were their intention to ketch him and scalp him alive, you know. Wal, they follered him to the pond, a-whoopin' and a-yellin' all the way, makin' shore on him. When he got to the pond he rid right in, the Injuns a'ter him, but his critter soon began to gin out. When he see that he jist gethered up his kit and jumped into the water, and swum for dear life. Two mile good that feller swum, and saved his kit and musket. The Injuns got his critter, but you never see nothin' so mad as they was to see him git off that a-way. The soldiers at the fort was a-watchin' all the time. They run down to meet him: they see he looked kinder foolish as he swum in, and as soon as he struck the shore he jist flung himself on the sand, and laid for half an hour athout openin' his eyes or speakin'. Then he done riz right up and toted his kit to the commander, and axed to hev the pond named a'ter him. The commander said it mought be so, and so hit was; and so it _has_ to be, I says, and allays will."

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES
TOWNSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON



It would be impossible to detail the exquisite and varied beauty of the way between Kingsley's Pond and Ekoniah Scrub. Through the fair primeval forest we wandered, following the old Alachua Trail, the very name of which

enhanced the charm of the present scene by calling up thrilling fancies of the past; for this is the famous Indian war-path from the hunting-grounds of the interior to the settlements on the frontier, and may well be the oldest and the

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

most adventure-fraught thoroughfare in the United States. We could hardly persuade ourselves that we were not passing through some magnificent old estate--of late, perhaps, somewhat fallen into neglect--so perfect was the lawn-like smoothness of the grassy uplands, so rhythmical were the undulations of the slopes, so majestic the natural avenues of enormous oaks, so admirable the diversity of hill and dell, knoll and glade, shrubbery and lawn, forest and park, interspersed with frequent sheets of water--Blue Pond, rivalling the sky in color; Sandhill Pond, deep set among high wooded slopes, with picturesque log mill and house; Magnolia Lake, with its flawless mirror; Crystal, of more than crystal clearness, with gorgeous sunset memories and sweet recollections of kindly hospitalities in the two homes which crown its twin heights; Bedford and Brooklyn Lakes, with log cottages beneath clustering trees; Minnie Lake, and its great alligator sleeping on a log; starry Lily-Pad; and Osceola's Punch-bowl, deep enough, and none too large, to hold the potatoes of a Worthy; Twin Lakes, scarce divided by the island in their midst; Double Pond, low sunk in the green forest slope, a perfect circle bisected by a wooded ridge; Geneva Lake, dotted with islands and beautiful with shining orange-groves;--always among the lawns and glades, the forest-slopes and aisles of pines, with sough of wind and song of bird, and fragrant wild perfumes. Always with bright "bits" of life between the long, grand silences--a group of men faring on foot across the pine level; a rosy, bareheaded girl--the only girl in the place--searching for calves in the dingle, who gave us flowers and told us the road with the sweet, lingering cadence of the South in her velvet voice; two men riding by turns the mule that bore their sacks of corn to mill; two boys carrying a great

cross-cut saw along a sloping lakeside, a noble Newfoundland dog frisking beside them; the fleet bay horse and erect military figure of our host at Crystal Lake guiding us among the intricacies of the Lake Colony. Always with sunny memories of happy hours--gypsy dinners beside golden-watered "branch" or sapphire lake; the cheery half hour in the log house on the hill above the little grist-mill, with the bright young Philadelphians who have here cast in their lot; the abundant feast in the farm-house under the orange trees, and the "old-time" stories of the after-dinner hour; the pleasant days at Crystal Lake, where our first day's drenching resulted so happily in a slight illness that detained us in that lovely spot, and showed us, in the new colony lately settled on this and the adjacent lakes, how refinement and cultivation, lending elegance to rude toil and harsh privation, may realize even Utopian dreams.

The great farm on Geneva Lake was the first old plantation which we had seen since leaving Kingsley's, and this lies on the outskirts of Ekoniah Scrub, which has long been settled by native Floridians or Georgians. "Hit ain't a farmin' kentry, above there on the sandhills," said our host of the thrifty old farm on Lake Geneva. "It's fine for oranges an' bananas, but the Scrub's better for plantin'. Talk about oranges! Look a' that tree afore you! A sour tree hit were--right smart big, too--but four year ago I sawed it off near the ground and stuck in five buds. That tree is done borne three craps a'ready--fifteen oranges the second year from the bud, a hundred and fifty the third, and last year we picked eight hundred off her. Seedlin's? Anybody mought hev fruit seven year from the seed, but they must take care o' the trees to do it. Look a' them trees by the fence: eight year old, them is. Some of 'em bore the sixth year:

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

every one on 'em is sot full now--full enough for young trees.

"Yes, that's right smart good orange-land up there in the sandhills. Forty year ago, when I kim yere, they was nothin' but wild critters in that lake kentry, as the Yankee folks calls it: all kind o' varmints they was--bears, tigers, panthers, cats and all kinds. Right smart huntin' they was, and 'tain't so bad now. They's rabbits and 'coons and 'possums, sure enough, and deer too; and--Cats? Why, cats is plenty, but they ain't no 'count.

"I niver hunted much myself, but I've heerd an old man tell--Higgins by name. Ef you could find him and could get him right, he'd tell you right smart o' stories about varmints, and Injuns too. I've heerd him tell how he went out with some puppies one time to larn 'em to hunt bear. He heerd one o' the puppies a-screechin', and kase he didn't want to lose him he run up. The screechin' come from a sort o' scrub, and he got clost up afore he see it was a she-bear and two cubs. The bear had the puppy, but when she see Higgins she dropped hit and made for him. Now, you know, a bear ain't like no varmint nor cow-beast; hit don't go 'round under the trees, but jest makes a road for itself over the scrub. Higgins hadn't no time to take aim, and ef he'd 'a missed he was gone, sure 'nough; so he jest drawred his knife, and when she riz up to clutch him he stuck her plum in the heart. Killed her, dead.

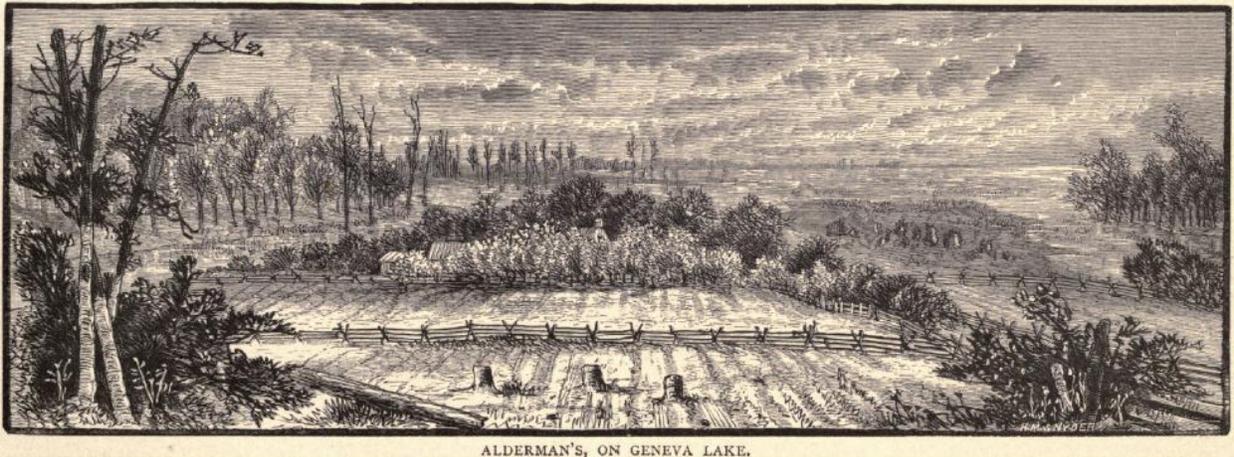
"No, I never had no trouble with Injuns. They was all gone to the Nation when I settled yere, but I see Billy Bow-legs onct, and Jumper, too. I was ago-in' through the woods, and I met a keert with three men in it. Two on 'em was kinder dark-lookin', but I never thort much of that till the man that was drivin' stopped and

axed me ef I knowed who he had in behind. It was them two chiefs, sure 'nough: right good-lookin' fellers they was, too."

We had left the sandhills of the Ridge, and had reached the borders of the Scrub, but there was yet another of the new Northern settlements to visit. It lay a few miles beyond Geneva Lake, in the flat woods to the south of Santa Fe Lake, the largest and best known of the group.

Who does not know the dreary flat-woods villages of the South, with their decaying log cabins and hopelessly unfinished frame houses--with their white roads, ankle-deep in sand, wandering disconsolately among fallen trees and palmetto scrub and blackened stumps? Melrose is like them all, but with a difference. The decaying cabins, new two years ago, are deserted in favor of the great frame houses, which, unfinished indeed, have yet a determined air, as if they meant to be finished some day. The sandy roads are alive with long trains of heavy log-trucks or lighter freight-wagons; there are men actually buying things in the three stores; there is a school, with live children playing before the door; there are saw- and grist-mills buzzing noisily; there is a post-office, which connects us with the outer world as we receive our waiting letters; there is a stir of enterprise in the air which speaks quite plainly of Chicago and the Northern States, whence have come the colonists; there is talk of a railroad to the St. John's on the east, and of a canal which shall connect the lakes with one another and with the railway on the west; there is a really good hotel, where we spend the night in unanticipated luxury upon a breezy eminence overlooking the silver sheet of Santa Fe Lake, which stretches away for miles to the north and eastward.

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES
TOWNSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON



ALDERMAN'S, ON GENEVA LAKE.

The morrow was almost spent while we lingered in the neighborhood of the lake. The road makes a wide circuit to avoid its far-reaching arms and bays: only here and there are glimpses of the water seen through the trees and cart-tracks leading off to exquisite points of view upon its banks. We are in the flat woods again--palmetto-clumps under the pine trees, pitcher-plants and orchis in the low spots, violets and pinguicula beside the ditches, vetches and lupines and pawpaw and the trailing mimosa in the sand. The park-like character of the woods is gone. Still, there are here and there gentle undulations upon which the long lines of western sunlight slope away; the lake gleams silvery through the trees; the air is pure and sparkling as in high altitudes.

It was evening before we could leave the lakeside and plunge into the dense new growth which adds to the ancient name of Ekoniah the modern appellation of "Scrub." Amid its close-crowding thickets night came upon us speedily. How hospitably we were received in the bare new "homestead" of Parson H----; how generously our hosts relinquished their one "barred" bed and passed a night of horror exposed to the fury of myriad mosquitos,

whose songs of triumph we heard from our own protected pillows; how basely Barney requited all this kindness by breaking into the corn-crib and "stuffing himself as full as a sausage," as the Small Boy reported,--may not here be dwelt upon.

The early morning was exquisite. Soft mists veiled all the glorious colors; great spider-webs, strung thick with diamonds, stretched from tree to tree; a little "pot-hole" pond of lilies exhaled sweet odors; the lark's ecstatic song thrilled down from upper air. There was a gentle hill before us, and halfway up a view to the right of a broad lake, with the log huts of a "settle_ment_" on the high bank. The sun has drunk up all the mists, and shines bright upon the soft gray satin of the girdled pine trees in the clearing; flowers are crowding everywhere--orange milkweed, purple phlox, creamy pawpaw, azure bluebells, spotted foxgloves, rose-tinted daisies, brown-eyed coreopsias and unknown flowers of palest blue. Butterflies flit noiselessly among them, and mocking-birds sing loud in the leafy screens above. A red-headed woodpecker taps upon a resounding tree and screams in exultation as he seizes his prey.

We skirted Viola Lake, cresting the high hill, and descending to a shaded valley where the

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES
TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

lapping waters plashed upon the roadside: then mounted another hill, among thick clustering oaks and giant pines, to where three lakes are seen spreading broadly out upon a grassy plain between high wooded slopes. And these are Ekoniah! Twenty years ago a tiny rivulet, wandering through broad prairies; eight years later a wider stream, already beginning to encroach upon the grassy borderland; now a chain of ever-broadening lakes, already drawing near to the hills which frame in the widespread plain. Famous grazing-lands these were once, the favored haunts of cattle-drovers, more famous hunting-grounds in older days, before firm prairie had given place to watery savanna. There were Indian villages upon the heights above and bloody battles in the plains below. But who shall tell the story of those days? The Indians are gone; the cattle-drovers have followed them to the far South; the new settler of twenty years ago cared nothing for antiquities or for the legends of an older time. The dead past is buried: even the sonorous old Indian name has been softened down to Etonia: be it the happy lot of this chronicler to rescue it from oblivion!

The lakes of the lately-traversed "Lake Region," frequent as they had been, were as nothing to those of Ekoniah Scrub. The road rose and fell over a succession of low hills, each ascent gained discovering a new sheet of water to right, to left or before us, deep sunk among thick-clustering trees. At rare intervals the forest would fall away on either hand, opening up a wide view of cultivated fields, sweeping grandly down in long stripes of tender green to the billowy verdure of the broad savanna, where silvery-sparkling lakes lay imbedded and great round "hummocks" of dark trees uprose like islands in the grassy sea. In the distance would be barren slopes of rich dark red and

silvery gray, swelling upward to the far dim mystery of pine woods and the blue arch above.

We ate our dinner beside Lake Rosa, a circular basin of clearest water rippling and dimpling under the soft breeze. Toward evening we found the ford, which a paralytic old woman sitting in a sunny corner of a farm-house piazza had indicated to us as "right pretty." Pretty it was, indeed, as we came down to it through the most luxuriant of hummocks of transparent-foliaged sweet-gums and shining-leaved magnolias with one great creamy flower. "Right pretty" it was, too, in the old woman's meaning of the word, for Barney drew us through in safety, scarce up to his knees in the transparent water which reflected so perfectly every flower and leaf of the dense water-growth. The road beyond was cut through an arch of close-meeting trees, and farther on it skirted a broad lake, which already, in its slow, sure, upward progress, had covered the roadway and was reaching even to the fence which bounds the field above. In this field is a large mound, never investigated, although the farmer who owns the property says he has no doubt that it is the site of an Indian village, for the plough turns up in the fields around not only arrow-heads, but fragments of pottery and household utensils. It was not our good-fortune to obtain any of those relics, as they have not been preserved, and this was the only mound of any extent which we saw. Such mounds are said, however, to be not infrequent in this district, and Indian relics are found everywhere.

As we drove along the hillside we began to notice frequent basin-like depressions of greater or less size, always perfectly circular, always with the same saucer-shaped dip, always without crack or fissure, yet appearing to have been formed by a gradual receding of the

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES
TOWNSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON



substructure, reminding one of the depression in the sand of an hour-glass or of the grain in a hopper. Many of these concaves were dry; others had a little water in the bottom; all of them had trees growing here and there, quite undisturbed, whether in the water or not; and there was no one who had cared to note how long a time had elapsed since they had begun their "decline and fall." There is little doubt, however, that the future traveller will find them developed into lakes, as, indeed, we found one here and there upon the hilltops.

How many times we got lost among the lakes and "pot-holes," the fallen trees and thickets of Ekoniah Scrub, it would be tedious to relate. How many times we came down to the prairie-level, and, fearful to trust ourselves upon the treacherous, billowy green, were forced to "try back" for a new road along the hillside, it would be difficult to say. The county clerk's itinerary had ended here, and William Townsend proved to be less ubiquitous than we had been led to expect. Thus it was that night came down upon us one evening before we had reached a place of shelter--suddenly, in the thick scrub, not lingeringly, as in the long forest glades of the lake country. For an hour we pushed on, trusting now to Barney's sagacity, now to the pioneering abilities of Artist and Scribe, who marched in the van. Fireflies flitted about, their unusual brilliancy often cheating us into the fond hope that shelter was at hand. The ignes-fatui in the valley below often added to the deception, and after many disappointments we were about to spread our blankets upon the earth and prepare for a night's rest *al fresco* when we heard a distant cow-call. Clear and melodious as the far-off "Ranz des Vaches" it broke upon the stillness, gladdening all our hearts. How we answered it, how we hastened over logs and through thickets in the direction of answering voices and glancing lights--no ignes-fatui now--how we were met halfway by an entire family whom we had aroused, and with what astonishment we heard ourselves addressed by name,--can better be imagined than described. By the happiest of chances we had come upon the home of some people whom we had casually met upon the St. John's River only a few weeks before, and our dearest and oldest friends could not have welcomed us more cordially or have been more gladly met by us.

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

In the early morning we heard again, between sleeping and waking, the musical cow-call. It echoed among the hills and over the lakes: there were the tinkling of bells, the pattering of hoofs, the eager, impatient sounds of a herd of cattle glad of morning freedom. It was like a dream of Switzerland. And, hastening out, we found the dream but vivified by the intense purity of the air surcharged with ozone, the exquisite clearness of the outlines of the hills, the sparkling brightness of the lakes in the valley, the freshness of glory and beauty which overspread all like a world new made.

One of the great events of that day was a desperate fight between two chameleons in a low oak-scrub on the hilltop. The little creatures attacked each other with such fury, with such rapid changes of color from gray to green and from green to brown, with such unexpected mutations of shape from long and slender to short and squat, with such sudden dartings out and angry flamings of the transparent membrane beneath the throat, with such swift springs and flights and glancings to and fro, as were wonderful to see. It seemed as though both must succumb to the fierce scratchings and clawings; and when at last one got the entire head of his adversary in his mouth and proceeded deliberately to chew it up, we thought that the last act in the tragedy was at hand. The Small Boy made a stealthy step forward with a view to a capture, when, presto! change! two chameleons with heads intact were calmly gazing down upon us with that placid look of their kind which seemed to assure

us that fighting was the last act of which they were capable.

That day, too, is memorable for the charming scenes it brought us, impossible for the pencil to reproduce with all their sweet accessories. We have found the ford at last, where the blue ribbon of the stream lies across the white sand of our road. The prairie stretches out broad and green with many circular islets of tree-mounds in the ocean-like expanse. The winding road beyond the ford leads, between cultivated fields on one side and the tree-bordered prairie on the other, up to the low horizon, where soft white thunderheads are heaped in the hazy blue. The tinkling of cow-bells comes sweetly over the sea of grass; slow wavelets sob softly in the sedges of the stream; fish glance through the water; a duck flies up on swiftly-whirring wing. A great moss-draped live-oak leans over the stream, and the perfume of the tender grapes which crown it floats toward us on the air.

Again, after we have climbed the hill to Swan Lake, and have dined beside Half-moon Pond, and have "laid our course," as the sailors say, by our map and the sun, straight through the Scrub to visit Lake Ella, we come out upon the heights above Lake Hutchinson. The dark greens of the foreground soften into deep-blue shadows in the middle distance. Lake Hutchinson sparkles, a vivid sapphire, against the distant silvery-gray of Lake Geneva, while far away the low blue hills melt, range behind range, into the pale-blue sky.

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES
TOWNSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON



SANTA FÉ LAKE.

Our faces were turned homeward, but there were yet many miles of the Ekoniah country running to northward on the east of the Ridge, and lakes and lakes and lakes among the scrub-clothed hills. A new feature had become apparent in many of them: a low reef of marsh entirely encircling the inner waters and separating them from a still outer lagoon, reminding us, with a difference, of coral-reefs encircling lakes in mid-ocean. The shores of these lakes were not marshy, but firm and hard, like the lakes of the hilltops, with the same smooth forest-slope surrounding. Is a reverse process going on here, we wondered, from that we have seen in the prairies, and are these sheets of water to change slowly into marsh,

and so to firm land again? There are a number of such lakes as these, and on the heights above one of the largest, which they have called Bethel, a family of Canadian emigrants have recently "taken up a homestead."

There was still another chain of prairie-lakes, the "Old Field Ponds," stretching north and south on our right, and as we wound around them, plashing now and again through the slowly-encroaching water, we had 'Gator-bone Pond upon our right. The loneliness of the scene was indescribable: for hours we had been winding in and out among the still lagoons or climbing and descending the ever-steeper, darker hills. Night was drawing on; stealthy mists came creeping grayly up from the endless

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES

TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

Old Field Ponds; fireflies and glow-worms and will-o'-the-wisps danced and glowered amid the intense blackness; frogs croaked, mosquitos shrilled, owls hooted; Barney's usual deliberate progress became a snail's pace, which hinted plainly at blankets and the oat-sack,--when, all at once, a bonfire flamed up from a distant height, and the sagacious quadruped quickened his pace along the steep hill-road.

A very pandemonium of sounds saluted our ears as we emerged from the forest--lowings and roarings and shriekings of fighting cattle, wild hoots from hoarse masculine throats, the shrill tones of a woman's angry voice, the discordant notes of an accordion, the shuffle of heavy dancing feet. We had but happened upon a band of cow-hunters returning homeward with their spoils, and the fightings of their imprisoned cattle were only less frightful than their own wild orgies. If we had often before been reminded of Italian skies and of the freshness and brightness of Swiss mountain-air, now thoughts of the Black Forest, with all of weird or horrible that we had ever read of that storied country, rushed to our minds--robber-haunted mills, murderous inns, treacherous hosts, "terribly-strange beds." Not that we apprehended real danger, but to our unfranchised and infant minds the chills and fevers which mayhap lurked in the mist-clothed forest, or even a wandering "cat," seemed less to be dreaded than the wild bacchanals who surrounded us. We would fain have returned, but it was too late. Barney was already in the power of unseen hands, which had seized upon him in the darkness; an old virago had ordered us into the house; and when we had declined to partake of the relics of a feast which strewed the table, we were ignominiously consigned to a den of a lean-to opening upon the piazza. A "terribly-strange bed" indeed was the old four-

poster, which swayed and shrieked at the slightest touch, and myriad the enemies which there lay in wait for our blood. We were not murdered, however, nor did our unseen foes--as had once been predicted by a Cracker friend--_quite_ "eat us plum up, bodaciously alive." In the early morning we fled, though not until we had seen how beautiful a home the old plantation once had been. These were not Crackers among whom we had passed the night, but the "native and best." Not a fair specimen of this class, surely, but such as here and there, in the remoter corners of the South, are breeding such troubles as may well become a grave problem to the statesman--the legitimate outgrowth of the old regime. War-orphaned, untutored, unrestrained, contemning legitimate authority, spending the intervals of jail-life in wild revels and wilder crimes,--such were the men in whose ruined home we had passed the night.

There was yet one more morning among the gorgeous-foliaged "scrub-hills," one more gypsy meal by a lakeside, one more genial welcome to a hospitable Cracker board, and we were at home again in the wide sea of pines which stretches to the St. John's. In the ten days of our journey we had seen, within a tract of land some thirty miles long by forty in breadth, more than fifty isolated lakes and three prairie-chains; had visited four enterprising Northern colonies and numerous thrifty Southern farms; had found an air clear and invigorating as that of Switzerland, soft and balmy as in the tropics, while the gorgeous colorings of tree and flower, of water and sky, were like a dream of the Orient.

"But there!" said the Small Boy, stopping suddenly with a half-unbuckled strap of Barney's harness in his hand: "we forgot one

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES
TOWSEND TRAVEL IN CLAY 1880 – SEES BUDINGTON

thing, after all: never found William
Townsend!"--LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON.

