

The Last Day of the Holidays.

Through all the sunny morning anyone familiar with their habits would have noticed that a sort of gentle melancholy seemed to brood over the pool of the alligators. There had been five or six wrestling bouts, but they had been conducted in a half-hearted way as if simply indulged in to assist digestion. There was no go and dash about the performance.

Finally even these hollow attempts at play were given up, and a rippleless silence took possession of the pool. All the alligators, big and little, arranged themselves in a row, and, shutting their eyes, just rested the points of their long noses on the bank. They might have been so many pieces of green bronze.

Some people think that alligators can't count; but even the smallest alligator knew the day of the month, and that this was the last day in that outdoor pool. To-morrow they would be pushed and shoved and prodded and poked into winter quarters. For the little alligators that spelled s-c-h-o-o-l, horrid word! For the older alligators it meant a long stretch of days with no nice hot sun, no nice big pool, nothing to do but sleep and eat! And for the oldest alligator of all it meant teaching!

Was it any wonder they were all greatly depressed? But it is absurd to spend the last day of vacation in vain regrets. So when the oldest and largest gator crawled slowly out of the pool to the centre of the pen, all the rest opened their eyes at once, just as if he had said, "One, two, three, wake up!" When he had stretched himself at full length, he opened his mouth and made a sound like escaping steam. "Come on, all of you," he said. "Let's have one more game of pyramid."

Did you ever see alligators play pyramid? It is the oldest game in the world, invented by the first alligator that ever lived. He taught it to his children long ago in the land of Egypt, and they in turn taught it to their children. Only the alligators and crocodiles, their cousins, know how to play it properly.

When the oldest and largest alligator had stretched himself at full length, the next largest in the crowd crawled on top of him, with his head turned toward the big one's tail. Then both together gave the same steam-hissing sound, and then the next largest crawled up, and the next and the next, until on the top of the pyramid sat quite a little gator, with eight larger fellows underneath, all head to tail. Then they all let off steam together to attract the attention of the other pyramids, none of which was larger than seven gators high.

Then began the really difficult part of the game. Old Samson Alligator started to crawl slowly round the pen. If there were any hillocks in his path, or stones, or uneven places in the ground, he did not avoid them, as one might suppose, but even went out of his way to go over them. As he felt the load slipping to one side or the other, he would let off a little steam, which is the way alligators laugh to themselves. At the fourth jump, alligator number eight, who was next to the top, fell off. But little gator number nine just managed to keep his seat.

That pleased him very much, for it is the rule of the game that the top ones should fall first, and as number eight had fallen before him, he could stay on his back and ride round until all the rest were shaken off. This, naturally, took some time, and as all the rest fell off in regular order, number eight was in a bad humour at his mishap.

"Oh, you're terrible smart, I know!" he said, ill-naturedly, to little number nine. "Just you wait till to-morrow, when you begin school! Perhaps you'll find you don't know so much, after all!" But at the very mention of school his ill-humour vanished. After all, misfortune makes one kinder. He, too, had to go to school. When the keeper brought supper he had entirely recovered, and good-naturedly made a place for the smallest gator next to himself, and did not gobble more than four-sixths of the food that came their way.

"To-morrow's full of trouble," said the keeper to a friend. "We've got to move all these alligators. It's a job! There are so many now that we will have to separate 'em. Take out some of the big ones and put 'em in a separate corner."

At this all the little alligators near-

ly died of excitement. Suppose the teacher would be taken? They scarcely slept all night, and those that did dreamed of a tank where there wasn't a teacher, and it was always vacation. HENRY DICK.

A Little Queen's Pet.

When Queen Victoria was a little girl, before thoughts of the English throne had ever entered her head, she was the owner of a very fine coop of Cochin China fowls. There were very large white roosters, beautiful, plump hens and downy chicks by the dozen, for the coop was a very large one.

But the pet of all the pets was a big rooster, who had learned to know his little mistress and to follow her around the enclosure where he was kept. Many photos were taken of the Cochin China fowls, and later, when the little Victoria grew to be a woman and was called to the English throne, she took her Cochin China fowls with her, and had them installed at Grasse, one of her country seats.

They are still at Grasse, and for a generation the Queen's children and grandchildren have played with them and admired them. Last summer little

Lady Alexandra Duff, the Queen's little great-granddaughter, was taken to Grasse, and one day her nurse led her out to where there was a coop of beautiful Cochin China hens and chickens, all descended from the ones the baby Victoria played with sixty years ago.

A Turkish New-Year Dish.

Have you ever heard of cabobs? Maybe not. They are queer Turkish affairs, which in Turkey are eaten as we eat New Year's cakes in this country. If you would like to eat a cabob and pretend that you are a young Turk enjoying his New Year dish, try this way of manufacturing it: Cut a large onion in thin slices, and treat a big apple in the same way, after you have pared and cored it. Get the cook to slice for you four thin strips of bacon and four more of cold lamb or veal. Lay the sixteen pieces of onion, apple, bacon and cold meat upon a plate and sprinkle them with pepper and ginger. Next take a skewer and string them upon it—meat, onion, bacon, apple and so on. Wrap the skewers in buttered paper and bake two hours. Eat the cabob from the skewer and fancy that you are a happy little Turk on a holiday.



"Don't tell anybody you've seen me. They think I'm at home, catching mice!"

NURSERY TOWN
By Martha Burr Banks

Nursery Town is a beautiful place!
It lies in the middle of Mother Land,
And the sun that shines there is Mother's face,
And Nurse's the queen there who has command.

Now some of the places in Nursery Town
Are Baby-House Corner and White-Wood Farm.
With its Sheep, and the Shepherd all dressed in his gown,
And a wee woolly Dog to guard from harm.

In Picture-Book Row lives Little Boy Blue,
And Jack and his Sister, who tumbled down-hill,
And the funny Old Woman whose home was a Shoe,
And the other Old Woman who never was still.

Here's Building-Block Street, and the Soldiers' Camp,
And Tin-Train Station, near Bureau Alley,
And Window-Sill Walk, where the Soldiers tramp,
And Dolly's Lane, winding by Wood-Basket Valley.

The Cabinet Hospital stands there, too,
With its poor little patients all sick in their beds,
And gentle Nurse Needle and good Doctor Glue
To stitch up their arms or to stick on their heads.

And drifted in here is a snug Noah's Ark,
With brave Mr. Noah and all of his Crew,
And the Animals, also, aboard of his bark,
From a little pink Pig to a gray Kangaroo.

There are two little Boats, here in Nursery Town,
Moored close by the Ferry of Going to Sleep;
And a Pillow in each for each fair, curly crown
Of the two little Sailors who into them creep.

A Round Table Tavern's the spot where they're fed,
They stop there for Supper and Breakfast for two,
They've Potato or Hominy, Butter and Bread,
Or Eggs, Toast and Milk, and some Crackers may do.

Oh, there's never a place quite like Nursery Town!
So gay is the play there the whole of the day!
Just take a Step Up, and then take a Step Down,
And walk till you find it—it's not far away.

