

TEA TIME TALK

(BY WILMA J. MARCH)

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Lost, strayed or stolen—one alligator! Finder please return to the writer and receive reward. What reward? Well maybe a pair of tiny white rats. How's that? Mr. Gator, or maybe it was Miss Gator, yes we think it was the latter for she had the most to say, was the boss and took the lead in breaking bounds. However, it happened this way. You see they (both were christened but we won't disclose their names here) were having their sun-bath, being used to the Sunny State. They each had a leash and collar and were tied to a plum tree. It was nearly school time and many kiddies came to pay their respects on the way. Some how or other the 'gators didn't care for callers that day, so they were not very sociable. The dog barked and wanted to play but they would much rather sleep. To withdraw from the scene was rude but pleasant. In making haste beneath a clump of grass, the collar began to slide over the shoulders and one foot worked its way through. The keeper of the prisoners thrust it back but the act had been performed once and that was sufficient to show the little reptiles how an escape might be managed. The smaller of the two was getting angry and slashed its tail around in great style and even uttered the odd hiss when aggravated by the playfulness of the dog and the curiosity of the children. Yet, recognizing its keeper, no drastic results happened and the soothing strokes of one known to it subdued the turbulent emotions. Later when all was quiet they were left to bask in the warmth. Not more than a half hour had past when upon return it was discovered that both—not one mind you—but both had disappeared. The tiny collars, which were but binders from a loose-leaf book, had not been opened. One leash was taut, yet in the opposite direction from the other. Where could they have gone? That was the question. The dog was summoned. He was very seriously questioned as to his guilt in disposing of them. He recognized the importance of the summons by the tone of voice and he also knew the topic at hand concerned the missing 'gators. But with eyes as clear and innocent as a baby, he began searching for the missing treasures. Treasures, you say? Yes, just that. It isn't the easiest thing in the world to get a 'gator, especially a pair which had been trained to sleep in your hand and to know the hand that fed them. A wide search began and before long the dog had found one of them beneath a mound of grass. It was the largest and quietest of the two. But, though we searched for hours with the assistance of the dog to this day the other one has not been seen since. Some very cool nights may have chilled it causing its death, still there is a possibility that it may have crawled into some crevice and escaped the cold. Whether the lone one will survive without company is to be seen. However he is still spry and taking his pellets of raw beef or liver twice a week. He does not care for bread as we found out recently, when some was administered into his mouth. He promptly shook his head and spit it out. Where does he live, you ask? Well don't faint when I tell you. He calls the bathtub 'home sweet home', though he would much prefer the creek. What do we do with him when we wish to take a bath? Well that depends on the person, you see. Now the other day one of the family (I won't say who, but it wasn't I) took a bath with Mr. Gator as master of ceremonies. Of course the soap was taboo, for it was thought best to omit that caustic substance from his diet. Having tiny webbed feet he was able to swim about in short order.

We have thought seriously of placing a narrow window-screen across the outside of our bedroom door and then Mr. Gator could have a whole room of freedom. He'd make rather a nice mascot would he not? He really is as quiet as a mouse and perfectly harmless. His appearance is against him, that's all. Being of the reptile family he has the striped body of a snake and not unlike one in shape, except that he has four feet, which he can use to good advantage when on the ground.

And does he love to get on the clay? He talks and croaks and I am perfectly sure that they talked over their escape from bounds, as it was effected so rapidly and both in the very same manner—that of working one foot at a time through the ring about the throat and then scrambling and crawling till the body was drawn out. Wise little beggars.

S. M. Seaman of Beverly Lake, near Delta, brought an alligator from Florida several years ago when it was but a few inches long. Now it is nearly three feet long and seems to both thrive and enjoy its Canadian environment. It has never once offered to break bounds from the shores of the lake in the eight years of its life in the north.

Recently I was told about a 'gator which was several feet long and which had been the family pet for many years. Friends with a small child came to visit and were told to just watch the baby in case it might become frightened at the 'gator which was asleep on the couch.

Every day I am asked what I will do with mine when it grows several feet long. Well most of our worries never happen so what's the use of crossing the bridge till the time comes? I hope it will live and be just as tame as it is now. But I hardly think I shall keep it on the couch. Parlor lizards are a bit eccentric and haven't become a fad as yet, though it is nice to be different. One person I know brought a 'gator home from the South and it escaped bounds and lived in the garden all summer. After the vegetation had withered in the Fall they found Mr. Gator and he had evidently had a very prosperous season for he had grown slightly and was real fat and solid. I feel that perhaps mine will live now that it has survived this long. At first I was afraid they both would die. They were sick for several days, during which time I fed them milk with an eye-dropper.

The day following the mailing of this edition of The Standard Mr. Gator is going to be At Home to callers in the printing office window. That will be Friday and maybe Saturday too, so he is saying to you all "Come up and see me then".

Either Side the Border Line

(Conducted by Wilma J. March)

With the gift of the gigantic telescope at the beautiful new Observatory at Richmond Hill by Mrs. D. A. Dunlap, the Toronto University has the finest and largest astronomy equipment in the British Empire. The official opening took place last Friday with many outstanding guests present. Sir Frank Dyson, the former Astronomer Royal of England, presented a gift of two splendid paintings of the Greenwich Observatory, over which he presided for over two decades. The David Dunlap Observatory now holds the rank of having the second largest telescope in the world, the immense 100-inch mirror at Mount Wilson, California, being larger by 26 inches in diameter. Sir Frank stated that the new equipment would surely mean new realms of research along astronomical lines.

Well, well, as Jim Hunter says: Recently a letter reached Ottawa which should have been mailed 99 years ago. The epistle was addressed to a Colonel who is now dead, so quite fittingly the letter was sent to the dead letter office. Too bad some of our bad news, bills, etc., can't have the same fate.

Frozen fruit juices have been shipped from the South now for some time, to the summer resorts of the North. Now the Pacific Fisheries Experimental station have discovered an antiseptic ice-glaze for frozen fish. This discovery will mean a saving of millions of dollars, and is a cheap method of preserving the flavor, a prevention from drying and protects from germs.

With all the fruits and their juices in Florida, still it was discovered lately that many stores carry fruit juices canned in Japan. Meats canned in Russia also line the shelves of the same stores. Meat is not a product of that State for most of the meat shipped in is labelled "Western", meaning from the central or mid-western districts.

The Treasure Chest

(By Wilma J. March)

Apple Blossoms

I, who have seen an orchard white with bloom
In trembling loveliness the morning greet:
Lingered beneath its laden boughs at noon
And in the dreaming twilight, blossom sweet!
I, who have roved at will on hill-sides white
While the soft petals snowed upon my head,—
Pause on the street: in rapturous delight
See a lone tree its fragrant branches spread
Wreathed with the beauty only seen in May.
The matchless loveliness of apple-bloom!
Wafting me to a valley far away
By subtle magic in its loved perfume.
I turn away, but soon my steps retrace,
Deep in my heart a longing, keen as pain!
Oh, but to fill my arms and on my face
Feel the caressing petals once again
I, who have followed roadways winding on
Through miles of orchards offering their sweet,
Trespass upon a stranger's grassy lawn
To hold those fragrant blossoms against my cheek!
—Mary I. Woodworth

Flowers are the sweetest things that God ever made and forgot to put a soul into.—Henry Ward Beecher.

To me the meanest flower that grows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for words.—Wordsworth.

Lilacs

Lilacs do something to the soul of me,
Something which words can never quite express;
The magic of their perfumed loveliness
Might have its origin in sorcery,
So subtle is its spell. I never see
A lilac bush arrayed in Springtime dress
Nor catch its fragrance on a breeze-caress
Without a thrill of gay-mad ecstasy.
It has been always thus. I think I drew
Into my very soul their strange perfume
With my first infant breath. I know 'tis true
That at the window of my mother's room
A lilac bush in wild profusion grew,
And I was born when lilacs were in bloom.

Lovely flowers are the smiles of God's goodness.—Wilberforce.

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