

<<英国学生文学读本>>

图书基本信息

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书籍目录

章节摘录

版权页：插图： AMONG THE ALLIGATORS 1. One afternoon in May, I had paddled a few miles up a sluggish Florida river, in an almost uninhabited part of the country. As evening fell, I returned in the canoe, floating with the current. The woods were full of perfume, and I drifted idly along, drinking in the balmy breath of the pines and the fragrance of the lilies and other flowers which grew on every side. 2. The gentle hum of insects filled the air, and softened the shrill voices of the frogs among the reeds, while now and then trills of exquisite bell-like notes rang out from the throats of mocking-birds. Myriads of fire-flies flashed and faded in the thick undergrowth. Presently the moon sent her pale light through the thick foliage of the trees, and the misty vapour over the river shone with a faint silvery sheen. Enchanted with the beauty of the night, I let the current drift me slowly onward, though the damp air warned me to hasten my return. 3. As I entered a wide lagoon surrounded by a rank growth of marshy plants, I found the air filled with a musky odour. I knew by experience that it was the odour given out by the alligator. Soon I heard that sharp clacking noise which these creatures are fond of making with their huge jaws; and presently I saw a large alligator not fifteen feet away on my right, close to the bank of the river. In the bright moonlight, and in that clear water, the long body of the creature shone grayish-green. Every mark on it was distinct. Right ahead I saw another, and there was still another to my left; and farther on, in the shadow of the reeds, lay one, two, three big ones and several small ones. In front, the waters swarmed with them. 4. Drifting like a log with the stream, the canoe did not attract their attention. It was necessary to steer very carefully, however, in order to escape a collision with them, as one of them might return the blow with a snap of his formidable jaws. In spite of all my precautions, while passing under the shadow of some great trees, I ran straight upon the back of a large female alligator without seeing her. She did not move; and as the canoe grated against her side in passing on, her eyes glared into mine so near that I could have touched them with my fingers. I cocked my rifle, but the great creature made no effort to attack me. Then I saw about twenty little alligators regain their places on her back and head, from which my canoe had thrown them.

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