

# Sailing in South Florida Waters in the Early 1880s

## PART I

*Edited by* JOHN F. REIGER\*

Among the best sources for descriptions of South Florida in the 1870s and '80s is the weekly newspaper, *Forest and Stream*.<sup>1</sup> First printed in 1873 in New York City, the journal appealed to well-to-do sportsmen seeking hunting and fishing adventures in unspoiled regions. One such individual was James Alexander Henshall.

Originally from Maryland and a physician by profession, Henshall became well-known for his expertise as an angler. Among his works are the *Book of the Black Bass* (1881) and *Favorite Fish and Fishing* (1908). Journeying to South Florida in the late '70s, he discovered that the area's reputation for fantastic fishing—and hunting—was completely justified. In the fall of 1881 he decided to return to this outdoorsman's paradise, and it is this second trip that we are concerned with here.

Accompanied by several companions, he sailed a thirty-four foot schooner from Titusville on the east coast to Cedar Key on the west, taking three and a half months to complete the odyssey. Henshall later published an account of his various Florida travels in *Camping and Cruising in Florida* (1884), but the excerpts below are from the original *Forest and Stream* article.<sup>2</sup> Part I of this edited version covers the voyage from Titusville to Key West.

About the middle of December, 1881, my wife and I arrived in Jacksonville, Florida, on our way to Indian River. Proceeding to that model hotel, the Windsor, we were at once made comfortable. . . . The weather was warm and pleasant, and Jacksonville . . . looked . . . lovely. The grand old water oaks along the streets . . . looked . . . stately, while the gardens were . . . profuse of bloom. . . .

We left Jacksonville with regret, and embarked on the little steamer Volusia, on which I had made a trip to the head waters of the St. Johns

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<sup>1</sup>The University of Miami Library has the journal on microfilm from 1873 to 1911.

<sup>2</sup>J. A. Henshall, "Around the Coast of Florida" (nine papers), January 25, 1883 to March 22, 1883.

three years before. Of course I was at once at home with her versatile and ubiquitous master, Capt. Lund, who never seems to sleep, and who seems to be in every part of the boat at one and the same time. . . .

Arriving at Salt Lake, two hundred and seventy-five miles south of Jacksonville, we found the old wooden tramway, connecting Salt Lake with Titusville, a thing of the past. Its pine rails were decayed, its rolling stock had vanished, but its motive power, 'the mules,' stood calmly and meditatively, harnessed to . . . wagons, wagging their ears and whisking their mop-like tails in the same old fashion. . . .

Eight miles of sandy road through the pine woods brought us to Titusville, where we were warmly welcomed by Col. Nichols, of the Titus Hotel. Titusville was but a shadow of its former self. . . . Its streets were deserted, several of its stores burnt down, its long pier dilapidated and its railroad crumbling away.

"What is the matter with Titusville?" I inquired of a boatman leaning against a fence whittling.

"Rockledge has got the bulge [jump] on us," answered he, without looking up.

The hotels, however, are still alive, and the stores of Messrs. Dixon, Moore, Weger and Smith still keep up a good show of business. But I missed the old-time bustle and excitement of 'Sandpoint.'<sup>3</sup> Mr. Weger and his son are doing all in their power to promote the welfare of the place; the former was erecting a new store building . . . , and the latter had founded a weekly paper, the *Florida Star*. . . .

I found Capt. Strobhar's schooner Rambler, in which we were to make our cruise around the peninsula of Florida, not quite finished in her cabin accommodations, but which were being rapidly pushed to completion by her energetic skipper and the available force at his command. However, with the pleasant company of . . . [the] guests of the hotel, the time passed pleasantly. . . .

There is a resident taxidermist at Titusville, Mr. Serimageour, who is a genius in his way. He had some really fine specimens of mounted birds and mammals. He had just returned from a hunt in the scrub, where he killed five deer and a panther. While I was in his shop a woman and a boy brought in a fresh panther's skin for sale; the boy had shot it. . . .

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<sup>3</sup>The village was originally known as "Sand Point," but Colonel Henry T. Titus, postmaster and leading citizen of the hamlet, changed the name to Titusville. Despite this fact, the nickname "Sand Point" (one word or two) remained in common usage for some time.

The day before Christmas we went to Rockledge, twenty miles down the river, and were most hospitably entertained by Mr. Wilkinson, formerly of Richmond, Va. Mr. W. has purchased the orange grove and buildings formerly owned by Mr. Hatch, and has erected a fine roomy hotel, and though not entirely completed, we were nevertheless made quite comfortable. In the evening there was a Christmas tree for his pretty grandchildren, and a bonfire on the lawn. . . .

Rockledge had improved very much since my last visit. The orange groves were all now in full bearing—new houses, several stores, and a schoolhouse had been built, and a wooden tramway was being constructed to Lake Poinsett, the head of navigation on the St. Johns, and but three miles distant, to which point a steamer made three trips a week from Sanford, connecting at the latter place with the DeBary line for Savannah. The produce of the lower country was being shipped by this route, and supplies brought back—all of which explained why Rockledge had “got the bulge on Sandpoint.” Rockledge is remarkable as being one of the very few places in Florida where the people are not anxious to sell their homes. Her people are prospering and value their orange groves too highly to sell them even at extraordinary prices. . . .

We spent Christmas Day . . . very pleasantly at Rockledge with old friends, and on the next day sailed for Eau Gallie, where we arrived after nightfall and found a Christmas hop in progress. . . . There was a Christmas tree with a present for each guest. . . . My present was a half-dozen roasting ears of green corn. Think of it—Christmas and green corn!

The next day we set sail for San Sebastian River, passing Milbourne<sup>4</sup> on Crane Creek, and stopping a short time at Turkey Creek, where Charles Creech is still living in the cabin on the bluff, though he had taken unto himself a helpmeet since my last visit. We had a fair wind to Sebastian and sailed up to our old “Cabbage Camp,” just above the mouth of the North Prong, a short distance above Mr. Kane’s cabin on the main river. Here we jumped two deer within a hundred yards of camp. Jordan and I took the dingley and our shotguns, and knocked down several ducks.

We saw a large flock of coots, or mudhens, near the point of a small mangrove island, rounding which they rose at forty yards, when we discharged two barrels each and picked up twenty-four coots. The skipper carried a dozen to Mr. Kane’s family, while Jordan and I proceeded to dress the remainder. . . .

We spent two more weeks on Indian River and its tributaries, going

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<sup>4</sup>This town is now called “Melbourne.”

down as far as Fort Capron and the inlet opposite, and had many delightful experiences, fishing, hunting, shooting and collecting curious . . . marine specimens, and feasting on fish, game, oysters, crabs, turtle, oranges, bananas, guavas, etc. . . . As this was but an experimental or trial trip of the Rambler, we returned to Titusville. [From there, Henshall's wife left for the north, while he made final preparations for his cruise around Florida.]

Many of the boatmen on the river did not believe we were serious in our intentions, as a voyage around the peninsula had never been undertaken by any boat from that section. They were quite confident that we would proceed no further than Jupiter, or Lake Worth. Strange to say, though, there was not one to offer his services to sail the boat on this "big voyage," while for a run down to Jupiter a dozen would have offered, whose knowledge of seamanship, from their own account, was adequate to the circumnavigation of the globe. The Lake Worth boatmen, however, who made occasional trips in the summer to Key Largo and Key West, were not so incredulous, but looked upon the enterprise with doubt and suspicion, and forebodings of evil and disaster. But our ardor was not to be dampened, nor our enthusiasm quenched by any amount of blue water; and if the Rambler held together, we had a crew that would not desert her.

The Rambler was a small schooner, thirty-four feet in length, ten feet [a]beam, and drawing two feet aft; the bottom was half round, with a good, clean bow, and stern cut away somewhat like the sharpie.<sup>5</sup> She was strongly built, a good sailor, . . . though rather slow with cruising rig, but a dryer boat never plowed salt water. The cabin was quite roomy, eight by fifteen feet, with four and a half feet head room. The crew consisted of the "Squire" and "Jack" of Connecticut, "Buck" of Texas, the "Skipper," myself, and "Cuff." Cuff was the Skipper's dog, a cross between setter and hound, and a good all 'round dog on deer, turkey and quail. The Skipper was to sail the Rambler as far as Jupiter, at the foot of Indian River, where I was to take command and sail her by chart, compass and dead reckoning down the Atlantic coast to Key West, thence up the Gulf coast to Cedar Keys. . . .

At length, on the morning of January 16, 1882, with a southeast wind and close-hauled, we departed from Titusville. . . .

We passed in succession Addison's Point, Pine Island, Jones's Point, Rocky Point, City Point, Oleander Point, and were soon abreast of Rock-

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<sup>5</sup>A "sharpie" is a long, narrow, flat-bottomed boat with a centerboard and one or two masts rigged with triangular sails. Employed mainly for fishing, the vessel was once common in New England.

ledge. That night we made San Sebastian River. We sailed up to the forks, then poled up the South Prong three or four miles. . . .

Sailing out of San Sebastian River into Indian River, a break in the coast line opposite can be seen, which is the beginning of an attempt by the settlers in the vicinity to cut an inlet to the sea. Four or five miles below the mouth of San Sebastian we come to Pelican Island, an outlying isle of a group some eight miles in extent, forming Indian River Narrows. For two years the pelicans had ceased breeding on this island, owing to their being continually harassed and wantonly and mercilessly shot by Northern tourists. This year they were again nesting. . . .

Passing through the Narrows, we stopped awhile to visit old Capt. Estes, a noted hunter, who has lived alone on an island at the foot of the Narrows for nearly thirty years. We found him laid up with . . . rheumatism in his palmetto shanty; a fire blazing in a huge iron kettle sunk in the floor lit up the sombre interior, the smoke finding its exit through openings along the ridge-pole. . . . In the shanty were many trophies of his prowess. Among others, the skull and skin of a large manatee, also a huge rope net used in the capture of these curious animals. . . . Within a mile of Estes's shanty is United States Life Saving Station No. 1, on the sea beach. . . .

About ten miles below the Narrows, and nearly opposite Fort Capron, we entered Gardiner's Cut, at the entrance to which was the turtling camp of Arthur Park and Jim Russell, and a mile further on we anchored in Pinkham's Cove, near the sea beach, and just above Indian River Inlet. After a ramble on the ocean beach, where we saw half a dozen immense blackfish<sup>6</sup> stranded, we gathered several barrels of oysters, fished to our heart's content, and shot a number of curlew and bay snipe. Toward evening we were driven away by the sandflies. Making sail we crossed the inlet and entered the Fort Pierce Cut. Here we encountered a school of porpoises and a number of large tarpum<sup>7</sup> . . . , the latter being from six to eight feet in length. As they rolled out on the surface their bright armor of silver scales, as large as silver dollars, shone resplendent in the slanting rays of the setting sun. Jack was trolling and expressed a great desire to hook one, but it was well enough he didn't, for he might as well have been fast to a steam tug. We crossed over to Fort Pierce, on the mainland, four miles below Fort Capron, and dropped the anchor about dark. After supper a 'norther came on which blew big guns, but the Rambler rode it like a duck.

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<sup>6</sup>"Blackfish" is another name for the pilot whale.

<sup>7</sup>Today, the accepted spelling for this fish is "tarpon."

We went ashore at Fort Pierce to chat with Ben Hogg, who keeps a store at that place. Ben has a monopoly of the Indian trade in Southeast Florida, and buys their deer hides, 'gator teeth and beeswax. A party of Indians from the Everglades were then hunting back in the flat woods, their canoes being drawn up on the shore in front of the store. Ben has a good seagoing sloop in which he makes occasional trips to Jacksonville, going out at the inlet opposite, leaving his . . . wife . . . to 'tend store in his absence.

A few miles below Fort Pierce we stopped at Hermann's Grove for a supply of sour oranges for culinary purposes, sour orange juice and soda being superior to baking powders in the construction of the . . . flapjack. . . . Below this, and about seven miles above the mouth of St. Lucie River, Mr. Richards has built a large house and has quite a clearing planted to oranges and pineapples. Nearly opposite, on the east shore, can be seen the hamak<sup>8</sup> once owned by "Old Cuba." Poor . . . Cuba! A year or two ago he was drowned by the capsizing of his boat, and when found his body was headless. Four miles below Cuba's is U.S. Life Saving Station No. 2, opposite the mouth of the St. Lucie. A few miles below Richard's we came to Waveland, a new post-office at the residence of Dr. Baker, who has a good hamak lying between Indian and St. Lucie rivers.

At the mouth of St. Lucie, as usual, were thousands of coots and many ducks; we got a good supply as we sailed along. The St. Lucie, from its mouth to the main fork, some eight miles, is a large river whose waters are entirely fresh; it divides into a north and south branch. We sailed up to the main fork, seeing several manatees on the way. As we passed Mt. Pisgah, a high ridge on the northeast shore, whose bare summit is crowned by an ancient mound, we saw at its foot the tent of a newly-arrived young man and his wife, from Philadelphia, who had bought a piece of land without seeing it, and found it to be located on the bald top of Mt. Pisgah.

The wind being favorable, we sailed up the south fork some four miles, being altogether about twelve miles from the mouth. Here we moored the schooner for a camp of several days, and had fine sport, there being an abundance of deer, turkey and quail. . . .

At night the favorite sport of the boys was shark fishing; and even at this remote camp, though fully twelve miles from brackish water, they caught many small sharks. On one occasion they hooked and landed an

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<sup>8</sup>A tract of forested land elevated above the level of the adjacent marsh is now spelled "hammock" or "hummock."

immense soft-shelled turtle . . . , whose carapace was nearly three feet long; he made a good pot of soup, and furnished some palatable steaks.

With a favorable wind we left St. Lucie camp and proceeded down the river, seeing several more manatees or seacows in the main stream, with one of which we had an exciting race for a short distance as he swam a few yards ahead, but was forced to make for the grassy bottom as the bow of the schooner touched him. They swim very swiftly for so unwieldy an animal, but make much fuss about it, leaving a wake as large as a steamtug. Sailing down Indian River we soon came to Jupiter Narrows, near the head of which is a closed inlet, Gilbert's Bar; there was some talk of reopening this inlet. Passing through the Narrows, some ten miles, we emerged into Hobe's Sound, as the lower ten miles of Indian River is called. Here the boys had a surfeit of trolling for crevalle. At Conch Bar, midway between the Narrows and Jupiter, we sighted the tower of Jupiter light, which we reached in another hour.

At Jupiter we found several parties of tourists. . . . Mr. James Armour is still chief keeper of Jupiter light, his assistants being Messrs. Spencer and Carlisle. He was very courteous during our sojourn, and twice he and Mr. Carlisle hunted with us with their hounds, but the Indians had made the deer wild; turkeys, however, were plentiful enough. . . .

The boys had many a fierce contest with the large sharks and sawfish at Jupiter, catching many white and blue sharks from six to twelve feet long. Their shark fishing was always practiced at night, they being engaged in other sports and adventures during the day. . . .

One night the boys tackled a foe worthy of their steel in a huge jawfish. . . . It took all hands to land it, and, as in the case of the sharks, a rifle ball through the head to quiet it. The next morning Mr. Armour weighed it on his steelyard, which it balanced at three hundred and forty pounds. The shark tackle consisted of three hundred feet of half-inch manilla rope, and immense long-shanked shark hooks with chain and swivel attached. . . .

At Jupiter, Buck left us to our great regret, being compelled to return to Texas on business, for it was now the middle of February. He took passage with Capt. Hammon for Titusville. . . .

The next day we went out over Jupiter Bar at high water slack, and with a head wind; consequently we had to use the poles in getting out. There was a heavy swell but not much sea, and with a light easterly breeze we made Lake Worth Inlet, ten miles below, in a little less than three hours. We ran the inlet about half way, but there not being wind enough



to stem the strong ebb, we anchored until the turn of the tide. Lake Worth Inlet has increased in depth to about seven feet at low water, and withal is much straighter than at my former visit. With the young flood we entered the lake, and at once sailed down some six miles to the house of Squire Charley Moore, whom we found as kind and jolly as of old. Lake Worth had vastly improved, a post office was established, new settlers were coming in, and all seemed prosperous. Two schooners were running to Jacksonville, carrying tomatoes, bananas, pineapples, etc., which, with the boats running to Rockledge and Titusville, afforded good transportation.

The next day we sailed down the lake to the residence of E. M. and John Brelsford, formerly of Xenia, Ohio, who seemed to be well pleased with their new location, and were living comfortably in their tropical home, which was doubly blessed by the presence of their charming mother and lovely sister who were spending the winter with them. We took tea with them, and afterward we all repaired to Capt. Dimmick's, where we passed a most agreeable evening, one very enjoyable feature being an impromptu concert by the Brelsfords, with violin, guitar, violoncello and cabinet organ. Jack, Squire and the Skipper all lost their hearts on this occasion, and in order to keep peace among them, and to preserve a proper state of discipline aboard the Rambler, I deemed it imperative to take our leave the next morning.

On the day following we tightened up the shrouds and bobstay, looked to the strapping of blocks, and made everything snug and ship-shape, for the next day after, we were to make a sail of forty miles by sea to the next inlet below—Hillsboro River. The day broke clear and fine, and by nine o'clock a fresh wind was blowing from the north. Everything was propitious, so we made sail, hoisted anchor, and put to sea, keeping well inshore, just beyond the line of breakers, to avoid, so far as possible, the current of the Gulf Stream, which here flows northward at a two-knot rate.

As we passed the beach near the trails from the . . . settled portion of Lake Worth, we saw a lady busily engaged in picking up sea-shells. Jack seized the conch-horn and blew a shrill blast, at which she looked up and waved her handkerchief. . . . At the foot of Lake Worth we saw, on the beach ridge, the cabin formerly occupied by the Hubell family. . . . Five miles further on is U.S. Life Saving Station No. 3, and ten miles further we were abreast of the bold rocks of Boca Ratoue,<sup>9</sup> where there is a closed inlet to a branch of the Hillsboro. There is a great sameness in the appearance of the southeast coast of Florida, being mostly a narrow

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<sup>9</sup>"Boca Ratoue" is a corruption of "Boca Raton."



white beach, backed by a low sandy ridge which is covered by saw-palmetto, oak scrub, sea-grape, and myrtle, with occasional clumps of cabbage palms and live oaks. At last, after a delightful sail, we sighted Hillsboro Inlet, with its group of cocoanut palms, which we reached at four o'clock, having made forty miles in seven hours—pretty good sailing against the current of the Gulf Stream. The tide was running out, with but a foot of water on the bar, so we were compelled to drop anchor and wait for the flood tide. Skipper took the canvas boat, the Daisy, and explored the channel, while Cuff jumped overboard and swam to chase 'possums,' coons, and hares. . . .

The wind hauled around to northeast, blowing fresh and kicking up quite a sea, causing the Rambler to jump and strain at her cable like a tethered mustang. Finally, through the contrary forces of wind and tide, she settled in the trough and began rolling fearfully among the breakers, when Skipper and I carried out a stern anchor in the Daisy and hauled her around into the wind, when she lay easier, but poor Jack was already the victim of *mal de mer* and had gone below, where he remained until eight o'clock, when there being a half fathom of water on the bar, we sailed into the river. . . .

After waiting a day or two in vain for a fair wind, we left Hillsboro River with a strong southeast wind and a heavy chop sea, and sailed closehauled, making long legs and short ones down the coast, bound for New River Inlet, twenty miles below. After a few miles Jack was compelled to go below and Skipper was anxious to put back, but I was desirous to know how the Rambler would behave in a heavy seaway. She worked to a charm, and after an exceedingly rough passage, the sea running very high, and in the teeth of half a gale, we made New River Inlet, where, though the tide was ebbing, there was plenty of water on the bar, and we at once made the run in, with Skipper at the masthead to look out [for] the channel. A large brig beating down the coast ahead of us and laboring hard in the heavy sea made it look worse to the boys than it really was, though it was, forsooth, lumpy . . . enough, and proved to be the roughest bit of sailing we encountered on the voyage. The wind had been squally for several days, hauling from northeast to southeast; consequently, old Atlantic was on a high and tried his best to carry our bowsprit away, but it was a stout stick and stood the racket bravely.

We anchored in the river a hundred yards above the north point of the inlet, where there was plenty of water and good holding ground for the mud hook [anchor]. New River, for six miles above its mouth, is the straightest, deepest and finest river I have seen in Florida, although a narrow one. . . .

Rushing in and out with the tide, at New River, fishes can be seen by thousands, snapping at anything, even a bit of white rag tied to the hook and thrown to them by a strong hand line. We took crevalle from ten to thirty pounds, always large ones here, never less than ten pounds. By anchoring a boat in mid-stream they can be speared or grained as they swim rapidly by, often pursued by sharks and porpoises. . . . The largest alligator we killed was here. He had crawled out on the shore where the boys had left some sharks, when Jack shot him from the schooner. . . . He was twelve feet in length. Alligators seem to be as much at home in salt water as in fresh.

Six miles above the inlet is the 'haulover,' opposite the site of old Fort Lauderdale, and marked by a group of cocoanut trees. From here the river runs southerly, to its mouth, and parallel with the sea beach, the intervening strip of ridge being nowhere much over a hundred feet in width. At the haulover the river spreads out into a broad, shallow bay, into which empty its North and South branches and several creeks, and is diversified by several islands. Two miles above the haulover, on the east bank, is the wharf or landing of Life Saving Station No. 4, the latter a quarter of a mile away on the sea beach. We made fast to the wharf and went to the station to see my old friend, Wash. Jenkins, the keeper in charge. We found him alone, his family being away on a visit to Key West. He was very glad to see us, not having seen a human face since his family left three weeks before. His nearest neighbors are at Biscayne Bay, twenty miles below, and Steve Andrews at Station No. 3, twenty-four miles above.

We spent two or three days here shooting ducks, coots and snipe, and one day went out with Jenkins and his dogs for deer.

That night we planned an expedition up the South Branch to the Everglades, to visit an Indian village some twenty miles distant. Accordingly, next morning we moved the Rambler safely in [to] the bay, making everything snug and taut. Taking our guns, a rod or two, some trolling tackle, and grub enough for several days, we embarked in an Indian cypress canoe, belonging to Jenkins, some twenty feet in length and two feet [a]beam, with sprit-sail, poles and paddles. We started at nine o'clock, sailing across the bay to the South Branch, which, being very crooked, we furled the sail and each man took a paddle. This branch of New River is much like other rivers in Southeast Florida. About an average width of fifty yards, with perpendicular [*sic*] banks, green to the water's edge with a profusion of wild grasses and shrubs, and with a varying depth of from three to twenty feet. Many alligators were sunning themselves on the sand spits at the lower end of the stream. As we progressed the water became deeper and the current stronger. The banks were clothed,

usually with pines, with an occasional hamak of palmetto, water oak, swamp maple, bay, Spanish ash and other timber. Here and there were little coves or bights thickly grown with rushes, and aquatic plants bearing bright-colored flowers.

We soon reached the great cypress belt, through which the amber-colored stream poured silently and swiftly, though so clear that great masses of white, coralline rocks, seamed, fissured and lying in endless confusion, could be plainly seen at the bottom, through the crevices of which were growing the most beautiful and curious aquatic plants and grasses. The tall cypresses, with pale and grizzled trunks, stood in serried ranks like grim spectres, ornamented in a fantastic fashion with the scarlet plumes of air-plants, while their long arms meeting overhead were draped in heavy folds and festoons of gray Spanish moss. The solemn and impressive stillness was broken only by the wild cry of some startled egret, heron or osprey, which echoed through the weird forest with a peculiarly hollow emphasis, and at last died away in a low mournful cadence. Our own voices sounded unnatural and strangely sonorous, resounding as though beneath the dome of some vast cathedral.

Passing through the cypress belt we came to the "sloughs" where the stream divided into several smaller ones. The "sloughs" is a margin of tall grasses and shrubs of . . . luxuriant growth, intersected by numerous small streams, and lying between the cypresses and the Everglades proper. Getting through this we finally emerged into the Everglades, seemingly a sea of waving green grasses, with innumerable islands of all sizes. But these grasses are all growing in water, clear and limpid, with channels a few feet wide, diverging and crossing in every direction, through which a canoe can be sailed or poled; there was then two feet of water in the Everglades. A brisk breeze blowing, we unfurled the sail and went skimming along, greatly to our satisfaction and relief, for we were quite tired after paddling up stream some six hours. . . .

Seeing a smoke several miles away, we sailed in that direction through the intricate and narrow channels, often making short cuts by plowing through masses of lily-pads. . . . As we neared the smoke we saw several canoes shoot out from behind islands on our right and left, their white sails gleaming and darting along in the rays of the setting sun like seagulls, but all proceeding in the same direction, toward the smoke. Suddenly, one we had not seen came swooping down upon us like a huge bird of prey from the shelter of a small island; a tall young Indian, clad only in a light-colored shirt, a red belt and an enormous red turban, stood upon the pointed stern guiding the canoe with a pole, while an elderly Indian

sat amidships holding the sheet of the sail. They sailed through a converging channel into our course and waited until we were alongside.

“How d’ye!” said I.

“How!” answered the old man. “Me see’um canoe; me see’um white man; me wait; me glad see ’um. How!”

“We come to see you; have a good time; come to see your village,” said I. “We got big canoe—schooner—at station—at Jenkins’s.”

“In-cah! (yes, or all right). Me glad see’um; in cah!” replied he. . . .

Then pointing toward the pines on the mainland, he said: “Me go village—you come—in-cah!”

Then, hauling aft the sheet, they shot away, our own heavily-laden canoe seeming to stand still in comparison. These Indians had been at work in their fields on the islands, but seeing us coming, they quit work earlier than usual so as to get to the village before our arrival.

We soon came in sight of the Indian village, a cluster of twenty-five or thirty huts on the ridge of the pine woods, where we . . . landed, and were immediately surrounded by the young bucks, who looked on with great interest and curiosity as we unpacked the canoe. Cuff was at once at home with the Indian dogs. Big Tiger then came down to the landing, and pointing to a group of two or three huts a little separated from the rest, said:

“You house—you eat—you sleep—in-cah!”

We carried our [gear] . . . to the huts indicated, followed by the young bucks, who were much interested in the guns, rifles, and especially in the fishing rods, the use of which had to be explained to them by signs.

This village is one of several, where dwell the four hundred Seminoles yet remaining in Florida; the largest village is in the “Big Cypress,” some thirty miles distant. . . . This village was governed by Little Tommy and Big Tiger. . . . Besides [them] . . . there were Big Charley, Tommy Doctor, and several others with their squaws and families, half a dozen or more young bucks, several old women, a good many children and a host of dogs. The sun was setting in the Everglades as we got everything up to the huts and prepared supper.

These Indians lead a quiet, peaceable and semi-pastoral life, cultivating fields of corn, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, beans, bananas, etc., in the rich hamaks on the adjacent islands, their villages being in the pines

or the border. They also make starch from the "comptie,"<sup>10</sup> or wild arrowroot, which grows abundantly in the pine woods, and in the winter they hunt deer and bears. Such a life is not without its charms, shut out, as they are, from all the world by impenetrable cypress swamps, the only avenues to civilization being by way of the streams which drain the Everglades, the currents of which are so swift during high water that few attempt to ascend them to the Everglades, and still fewer succeed. In the spring and early summer the Everglades are comparatively dry; as Big Tiger said: "In two moons all water gone — cause no go more." During the autumn and winter the men go to the settlements, mostly to Miami on Biscayne Bay, by way of the Miami River, where they sell deerskins, . . . beeswax, comptie starch, vegetables, bird plumes, alligator teeth, etc., and buy cloth, calico, ammunition, tobacco, etc., and occasionally wy-ho-mee (whisky).

The men are tall, well-formed, straight and clean-limbed, and are quite neat in their dress, which consists of a calico shirt, a belt, breechcloth and a turban; the latter is a headdress quite remarkable in its construction and conspicuous and picturesque in appearance. It is some two feet in diameter and six inches thick or high, with a hole in the center to fit the head. It is formed of bright-colored shawls, the outside layer being sometimes a bright red cotton or bandana handkerchief; its shape is exactly that of a flat cheese, or a grindstone. It is quite heavy, and the body must be carried very erect to keep it balanced on the head; perhaps, the erect carriage of these Indians is to be accounted for, to a great extent, by the wearing of this singular headdress, for they are never seen without it, except sometimes when hunting.

The men's legs and feet are always bare, and look like columns of polished mahogany; sometimes, when hunting in the scrub, they wear buckskin leggins [*sic*] and moccasins. The women dress in short calico petticoats and a jacket . . . of gay colored cloth. Their necks are ornamented by many strands of beads, sometimes a hundred or more, and weighing many pounds. The young women and bucks have usually very good features and are very vain of their personal appearance. The hair of the men is shaved at the sides; that on the top and back of the head is formed into a long plait and coiled on top . . . The women dress their hair in a way perfectly incomprehensible to me, though plaits form a part of the arrangement. The old squaws are not blessed with good looks, and do the drudgery of the camp. The children are bright, active and full of fun; some of the boys go entirely naked, though during our stay they wore

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<sup>10</sup>"Coontie" is the more common spelling for this evergreen. Although it yields a starch like arrowroot, it is not—as Henshall suggests—the same plant.

short calico shirts. The boys are never without their bows and arrows, in the use of which they are very expert, killing quail and other birds, hares, squirrels, etc. The older ones, with their dogs, hunt gophers (land tortoises), and spear aquatic turtles and fish . . . Big Tiger and Little Tommy . . . wore a kind of hunting shirt of blue plaid calico with a broad collar, the whole ornamented with bright-colored fringes, and strips of turkey-red calico along the seams. These Indians have agreeable, musical voices and talk in low, pleasant tones.

The houses are formed of upright posts set in the ground, [with] a thatched roof of palmetto leaves, and a floor about three feet from the ground, the sides being open. They sit on the floors during the day, and sleep on them at night, their beds being rolled up in the day-time. They all sleep under mosquito bars [nets], which are tucked up during the day. The store-houses are A-shaped and are closely thatched all around, with a door in one end. At one side of the village is a level, cleared space with a tall pole in the center, where they hold their dances at stated periods, the "green corn dance" being the most important. These are occasions of feasting, revelry and the wildest enjoyment, in which wy-ho-mee (whisky), as in more civilized assemblages, takes an active and prominent part.

As the twilight floated upward, and the darkness closed around, the night was filled with wonders. Small camp-fires were kindled in the open spaces between the huts, casting a ruddy glare around, lighting up the gay attire and swarthy features of the Indians as they silently moved about, gilding the trunks of the lofty pines and setting the shadows dancing and flitting through the open huts. The white smoke glided upward like tall ghosts and disappeared in the gloom above the tree tops. The young moon hung low in the west, . . . across the mysterious wastes of the Everglades. . . . Myriads of fire-flies flitted and flashed their tiny lanterns over the slender spires of reeds, rushes and rank grasses, their reflections gleaming and sparkling with the stars in the still reaches of the channels. The air was heavy with the redolence of balmy shrubs, honey-scented flowers and the spicy aroma of the pines. Strange night birds flew by on noiseless wing, great moths wheeled about in erratic flight, and fierce beetles went buzzing overhead. The chuck-will's widow was calling loudly, and the great horned owl woke the solemn echoes of the dense pine forest, while an incessant twittering and chattering of waterfowl, the piping of frogs, and the occasional bellow of an alligator came from the marshes. . . .

We repaired to the largest camp-fire, where the *elite* of the village were sitting and lounging about. The squaws, each with a babe in her lap . . . , were shelling beans, pounding hominy or pulling buckskin, the

men looking on, talking and smoking, and the children and dogs romping and playing. We were offered the best log at the fire and sat down. . . . There was a large garfish roasting on the coals. . . . A squaw . . . cracked it open with a stick, the horny covering parting in halves like a bivalve shell, the meat appearing white and savory, which was divided among the children, together with some sweet potatoes which she raked out of the ashes. . . .

We discovered that night why the Indians used mosquito bars; . . . my pen is inadequate to describe the miseries and torments we endured through neglecting to take ours with us. We slept, or rather tried to sleep, in the hut assigned to us, where by maintaining a circle of fires and smudges around the open hut we managed to pass the night.

. . . [We] spent two days at the village. . . . The Indians are good hunters and fair shots, but we beat them all at the target. . . . The Indians use modern breech-loading rifles of the best manufacturers, .38 and .44 calibre. Their canoes are made of huge cypress logs, . . . carefully and skillfully constructed. The boys learn to handle and sail them when quite young. They use the pole in preference to the paddle, owing to the shallow water, and always sail them when there is a fair wind. In the fall there is from four to six feet of water in the Everglades, caused by the heavy rains of summer, but in the spring "navigation closes."

We purchased some sweet potatoes and beans, repacked the canoe and prepared to leave, when [we discovered that] Cuff was missing. I had seen him not long before with a large Indian dog in the woods. Skipper was sorely troubled, fearing that the bucks had secreted [hidden] him; but I was satisfied he had gone hunting to show off his smartness to the Indian cur. Finally we left without him, Tiger agreeing to bring him down to the station next day, saying:

"When sun so," pointing in the west to where the sun would be at an hour high, "me—come—canoe—white man's dog—me bring um—in-cah!"

Three hours of sailing, paddling and the swift current of New River took us to the station landing, where we found the Rambler all right. The next day at the appointed hour Tiger was seen poling a small canoe across the bay, with Cuff seated in the bow.

The most favorable wind for sailing on the East coast of Florida is a westerly one, which, blowing off the land, renders the sea comparatively smooth. The day after I returned from the Everglades the wind was north-west, and had Cuff been aboard, we should have at once set sail for



Biscayne Bay, that being the most favorable wind we could have had. As a rule, the wind in Florida boxes the compass in the regular way, following the sun, so that by the time we were ready to sail it was easterly, but rather light, and though there was not much sea, there was a long and heavy swell from the northeast. We went out over the bar at ebb tide. New River Inlet is one of the best on the southeast coast of Florida, there being at low tide three or four feet of water on the bar. As the channels to these inlets are constantly changing, owing to the shifting of the sand, it would be useless to describe them in detail; but, as a rule the cruiser should sail below them until the stream opens well to view, and then sail in on the plane of the outflowing river which on this coast is generally in a northerly direction.

The shore line for ten miles below the New River Inlet is of a similar character to that already described, but it afterwards becomes more heavily timbered, owing to the proximity of streams about the head of Biscayne Bay. Twelve miles below New River we were abreast of Life Saving Station No. 5, the last one on the coast, under the charge of Ed. Barnott, and eight miles below it we entered Bay Biscayne through Narrow's Cut, between the mainland and Virginia Key. The lighthouse on Fowey's Rock (formerly on Cape Florida), and the first buoy marking the entrance to Hawk Channel from here to Key West, were in plain sight as we passed in. We at once sailed across Biscayne Bay, about eight miles, to Miami (old Fort Dallas), at the mouth of Miami River.

We sailed into the river a few hundred yards and anchored off the wharf of Mr. Ewan, who keeps a store and lives with Mr. Chas. Peacock in the old stone officers' quarters of Fort Dallas. Here I met my old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Peacock and family, Mr. Ewan and his mother, also Mr. and Mrs. Tuttle, of Cleveland, O., E. O. Gwynn, Esq., Mayor of Key West, and Mr. Curtis, of Jacksonville, Fla. Mr. Curtis was collecting specimens of woods for the Smithsonian Institution and other scientific museums, and had a valuable collection. We crossed the river to the store and post-office of Mr. Brickell, where we found an abundant supply of mail matter, this being the only post-office between Lake Worth and Key West, the mail being received via the latter place. We also met here Little Tommy, one of our Indian friends from the Everglades. There are many points of interest about Biscayne Bay, among others the "Punch Bowl," a large spring in the hamak of Mr. Brickell, and near the shore of the bay. In times gone by the buccaneers, pirates and wreckers of the Florida Keys and Spanish Main frequented this spring to fill their water casks from its great, rocky bowl. Of course the usual stories of buried treasures near the haunts of pirates obtain, and many and vain have been the searchings in the vicinity of the Punch Bowl. A few miles up the Miami there is quite

a rapids, called "The Falls," which will well repay a visit, being a lovely and most romantic spot. At the lower end of the bay the "Indian Hunting Grounds" begin, running to Cape Sable, where large game abounds. At the head of the bay, Snake and Arch creeks empty. Spanning the latter is a natural stone bridge or arch of coralline rock, under which boats may pass. . . .

In a beautiful grove of cocoa palms, at the mouth of the Miami, were encamped Mr. and Mrs. M., Mr. and Miss H., and Mrs. O., of Staten Island, New York.<sup>11</sup> The group of white tents added an additional charm to a spot as lovely and romantic as a scene in fairyland. Their camp and outfit were as complete and comfortable as possible, and they really enjoyed their open-air life. Mrs. M. and her sister, Miss H., were afflicted with pulmonary consumption, and had been drawn hither, as a last [resort] . . . , to try the healing virtues of the chlorinated breezes, balmy atmosphere and warm bright sun of this, the . . . most charming and . . . healthful location in Florida. . . .

We left Miami at eleven o'clock in the forenoon with a light easterly wind. Mr. E. O. Gwynn, Mayor of Key West, having concluded his business at Miami, and the mail schooner not leaving for several days, in fact had not yet arrived from Key West, we offered him a passage, as we intended going direct to that city. We greatly enjoyed his genial society on the trip, for being well informed, and a close observer, he possessed an abundant stock of information of that section of the country.

As we sailed out of Miami River, the line of keys shutting in the bay from the ocean were plainly visible toward the southeast, the most northerly being Virginia Key, then Key Biscayne, Soldier Key and Ragged Keys. The south point of Key Biscayne is Cape Florida, upon which stands the lighthouse tower, now abandoned as a light station. Eastward of Soldier Key, and five and a half miles S.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. from Cape Florida, is Fowey Rocks Lighthouse, on the northern extremity of the Florida reefs. It is an iron framework, with the lantern one hundred and ten feet above the sea, showing a fixed white light, visible in clear weather some sixteen miles. This light is situated at the northern entrance to Hawk Channel, leading between the line of Florida Keys and the outlying reefs, along the Florida Straits to Key West. The channel is from three to five miles wide and is about one hundred and forty miles from Virginia Key to Key West.

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<sup>11</sup>The people referred to are Ralph Middleton Munroe, his wife, Mrs. Munroe's sister and brother, and a friend. Ralph Munroe became a prominent figure in the early history of Coconut Grove.

Biscayne Bay is broadest abreast of Ragged Keys, and about here begin the Feather-bed Shoals, a series of parallel sand shoals stretching across the bay. They are easily discernible, showing quite white at a distance, and by following the shoal in either direction an opening will soon be found. Below Ragged Keys is a long one called Elliott's Key; near its southern extremity a group of small keys stretch across Biscayne Bay, separating it from Card's Sound. Small boats may proceed through Card's and Barne's sounds, and then keep under the lee of the line of keys to Key West; but it requires some previous knowledge or the employment of a competent pilot, to avoid the many mud flats, shoals and reefs of this route, for the water is shallow. . . . Owing to the many keys, mangrove islands and shoals, with the mainland to the north and the Florida Keys to the southward, the water is always comparatively smooth. There is an abundance of shore and wading birds, an endless variety of fishes, oysters, turtles, etc., while on the Indian hunting grounds on the mainland there is plenty of large game. . . .

Sailing down Biscayne Bay we took a number of tarpum, groupers, crevalle and barracudas on the trolling lines, and saw numerous loggerhead and green turtles. At the south end of Elliott's Key is a passage to the sea called Caesar's Creek, winding between that key and some smaller ones. We followed Caesar's Creek to the main channel inside the Florida reefs, . . . where we anchored at sundown, some thirty-five miles from Miami. The next morning broke clear and fine with a fresh E.N.E. breeze, and leaving the mouth of Caesar's Creek we went dashing along; leaving Old Rhodes Key to the starboard. We next came to the largest of the keys, Cayo<sup>12</sup> Largo, at the head of which we caught the last glimpse of the mainland that we would have until we sighted Cape Sable, after leaving Key West. . . .

The wind continued to freshen, bringing in a long-rolling sea between the outlying reefs, which caused Jack to seek the cabin and his bunk. . . .

We were now opposite Carysfort Reef Lighthouse, which is twenty-three miles S. by W. from Fowey Rocks Light. It shows a bright flash every half minute, visible some seventeen miles. Key Largo is some twenty miles long, has a number of settlers on it, and some large pineapple plantations, the largest being those of Mr. Baker. These keys are, most of them, thickly wooded with a variety of hard timber, buttonwood, crabwood, bay, palmetto, etc., with a fringe of mangroves. Several vessels were in sight, in the channel and outside the reefs. Those meeting us were beating northward under reefed canvas, but the Rambler, with the

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<sup>12</sup>Here Henshall uses the Spanish "cayo" for cay or key.

wind abaft the beam, had just enough for her cruising rig, and went bowling along with every thread drawing in the spanking breeze. We passed in succession, leaving them all to starboard, Rodriquez and Tavernier keys—both small ones—and Plantation, Vermont, Upper and Lower Mattacombe and Umbrella keys. Indian Key, a small, but high and prominent one, came next, where there is good anchorage and a number of large cisterns, where water can be purchased by passing vessels. Southwest of Indian Key is Alligator Reef Lighthouse, thirty-one miles S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. from Carysfort Reef Light. It is an iron frame pyramid, showing a scintillating light flashing every five seconds, every sixth flash being red. These lighthouses, built on submerged reefs by iron screw piles, are completely isolated, their keepers being shut off from all communication with the keys except by boats, lead a very secluded and semi-hermit life, while exposed to the fury of fierce gales and the lashing of the angry seas.

The Florida keys are now nearly all inhabited, and new buildings were being erected on many of them, owing to the "cocoanut boom." These keys were all being taken up, preempted, leased or bought, principally by Key West parties, and set out to cocoanut trees. As these trees will grow wherever there is soil enough on these rocky keys, and require little or no care after being planted, and as each tree is said to pay at least a dollar and a half per annum after six years old, it will be seen that a few thousand trees would yield a small bonanza in a few years, if all accounts are true. On some of the keys are groups of cocoa palms now full grown and in bearing, and whether they pay or not financially, they certainly add very much to the beauty and tropical appearance of the islands, and viewed in this light the "cocoanut fever" will prove of lasting benefit to this section.

At Long Key we left the main channel and went inside the line of keys to Channel Key, where we anchored at five o'clock under the lee of Duck Key. The route usually taken, it being somewhat shorter, is to go "inside," or on the northerly side of the keys from Long Key to Bahia Honda, from whence the main channel is again followed to Key West. The choice of routes is, however, usually determined by the direction of the wind and the state of the sea. With a northerly or westerly wind, the main channel is the smoothest, being then under the lee of the keys, while with an easterly or southerly wind, the other route is taken for a similar reason. The next morning we set sail at seven o'clock, the wind blowing harder than on the day before, and from the same direction, or a few points nearer east. We passed Grassy, Bamboo, Vaccas, Knight and other keys in quick succession, leaving them to port, and with the strong breeze and smooth water, under the lee, we made ten miles an hour from Channel

Key to Bahia Honda. Coming outside here we found a heavy sea running, and catching us on the port quarter, but the Rambler, very buoyant in light ballast, and being under full sail, skimmed the rollers like a sea gull. We did not ship a sea on the whole voyage. The fishing smacks, turtlers and spongers were all lying at anchor under the lee of various keys, waiting for better weather.

In plain sight was Sombrero Key Lighthouse, thirty miles S.W. by W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W. from Alligator Reef Light. This is a conspicuous open frame iron work tower, one hundred and fifty feet high, showing a fixed light, visible twenty miles. We now left to starboard Pine, Saddle Bluff, Sugarloaf, Loggerhead and other keys. Southwest of Loggerhead Key is the new lighthouse on American Shoal. Passing Cargo Sambo, Boca Chica and other keys and islands, we were in sight of Key West Lighthouse, and off to the southwest, Sand Key Lighthouse; the latter is forty-three miles W. by S.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. from Sombrero Light and seven and a third miles S.S.W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  W. from Key West light. Key West Lighthouse (harbor light) is in the city of Key West, southeast side, a brick tower, whitewashed, and shows a fixed light fourteen miles. Sand Key Light is a revolving flash light. Key West City now loomed up to view with its steeples, towers, and forts bristling with guns. Rounding Ft. Taylor we proceeded to the common anchorage of the coasters and fishing smacks, and dropped anchor at three o'clock, having made one hundred and fifty miles in twenty-four hours of sailing, an average of six and a quarter miles per hour. We made everything snug, got the anchor light ready, and put everything in ship-shape order for a stay of several days in port.

Key West, a thriving and prosperous city of some fifteen thousand inhabitants, is situated on the western portion of the island, the latter being five miles in length and about a mile wide. From its position as the "Key to the Gulf," with a deep and spacious harbor, and as a naval depot and coaling station it is a place of great commercial and maritime importance. It has a number of fine residences, buildings and churches, several hotels — the principal one, the Russell House — a marine hospital, a custom house, and U.S. naval depot. There is a neat and commodious barracks with well-kept grounds, though the troops are at present stationed at Tampa. There is also quite a large convent, surrounded by handsomely arranged grounds, just outside the city. The cemetery is tastefully laid out and charmingly adorned by tropical trees, shrubbery and flowering plants. The city is defended by several forts, the largest being Ft. Taylor, a brick and stone fortress mounting some two hundred guns. Steamers for Havana, Mexico, New Orleans, New York, Galveston and the Gulf coast touch here almost daily, besides a great number of

sailing vessels. . . .

Key West is a quaint and charming city, full of oddities and incongruities, a veritable town of eccentric "patchwork," wherein each edifice forms a "piece." Buildings of all sizes and of every conceivable style, or no style, of architecture, are promiscuously jumbled together, but are joined or seamed to each other by a wealth and profusion of tropical foliage, which surrounds, invests, surmounts and overshadows them, softening the asperities, toning down the harsh outlines, and uniting the separate pieces, which merge their individuality in a harmonious *tout ensemble*.

The modern stiff and flashy Gothic church glares superciliously through its cheap, Catherine-wheel window, as through an eye-glass, at the weather-stained but stout and solid old Spanish chapel, which looks up dreamily and good-naturedly at its prim rival, while the cocoa palm stretches its long arms over it protectingly, the date palm caresses it with slender, green fingers, and the almond tree looks on with conscious pride. The stilted, upstart frame residence, with scroll work hanging from barge-board and eaves, like cheap cotton lace ostentatiously displayed by a vulgarly-dressed woman, looks down haughtily on its little neighbor—a rambling one-story cottage of stone with broad projecting roof and cool verandas, almost hidden in a mass of vines, creepers and flowers, which cling to it in loving embrace. The iron-front store, with plate-glass windows, shoulders aside the dark and sombre Cuban café with its cages of singing birds and parrots hanging in the Pride of India trees, and its cool shadows embalmed and emblazoned by the bloom and fragrance of the oleanders.

And so, mansions, huts and hovels — balconies, canopies and porches — lattice windows, oriels and dormers — gables, hoods and pavilions — pillars, columns and pilasters — are mingled in endless confusion, but harmonized by arabesques of fruit and foliage, festoons of vines and creepers, wreaths and traceries of climbing shrubs and trailing flowers, and shady bowers of palm and palmetto, almond and tamarind, lime and lemon, orange and banana.

And its population is as diverse as its structures. Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, Cubans, Bahamians, Italians and negroes make up its numbers, the majority being Cubans and Bahamians, or "Conchs," as the English natives of the Bahamas are called. Here may be seen every shade of complexion, from white to yellow, brown and black, cosmopolitan all, though each class seems to live in its own quarter of the town — as "birds of a feather" mostly congregate in spe-



cialized groups — where, after nightfall, they enjoy themselves, each class after its own fashion, singing, dancing, and even drinking in its own language. Jack said he learned to drink beer in seven languages while there, which is a liqui-linguistic accomplishment that few attain, and fewer enjoy.

But there is a large and popular dance house at the west end of town, which we “took in” for Skipper’s benefit, where the harmonizing influences of the place are again exemplified, and where white, yellow, brown and black meet on a common level, male and female, and “chase the fleeting hours with flying feet” to the inspiring strains of a cracked violin and a piano which seems to possess a thousand wires and all loosely hung. And if the test of enjoyment is the energy displayed, they certainly enjoyed themselves to the top of their bent.

But we will take a long and upward step to a nobler and far more attractive scene, where the youth and beauty of the island city are assembled at the “Rink,” a large and brilliantly lighted hall in the heart of the town. Here were youths and maidens who had never seen a snowflake or an icicle, and who had never heard the merry jingle of a sleighbell; but all the same were gliding along gracefully and smoothly on roller-skates, or dashing around the outer edges on the swift-whirling bicycle to the fascinating strains of the “Beautiful Blue Danube”; while the mingled odors of the cape jessamine, the tuberose and the orange blossom floated in through the windows and doors. Oh, what a subtile and potent power in beauty, music and flowers. . . .

The chief industries of Key West are the manufacture of cigars, sponging, fishing, turtling and wrecking. There are, perhaps, a hundred cigar factories, from the one-story hut, scarcely bigger than its sign, to the large, airy and extensive buildings, each giving employment to hundreds of hands. The cigar makers are mostly Cuban refugees, and the tobacco is imported from Cuba, though for a time some Eastern dealers manufactured here a large quantity of domestic tobacco, which injured the trade and brought discredit on Key West cigars, so as to lessen the demand to a considerable extent; but, happily, the dishonest practice is discontinued, I believe, and only Cuban leaf is now used.

A large fleet of vessels are engaged in sponging, the crews being mostly “Conchs” and negroes. The sponges are taken in shallow waters, off the reefs and banks, where by means of the “sponge-glass,” a wooden pail with a glass bottom, the sponges can be plainly seen attached to the rocky bottom, and to shells, where they are torn loose by a strong iron hook affixed to a long pole. Each vessel tows six or eight small boats or



yawls, in which the men work. Some Eastern houses have sponge depots here; among others I noticed that of McKesson & Robbins of New York. The sponges are . . . washed, dried, bleached and assorted, and are of various grades and kinds.

Every morning may be seen many small fishing smacks, moored stern on along the fish wharf, with their wells filled with live pan fish, such as grunts, porgies, groupers, snappers, hogfish, yellow tails, spots, etc., which are killed and strung in bunches as fast as sold, selling for five or ten cents a bunch, and on account of their cheapness form the principal part of the diet of the working classes. These pan fish are some of them very beautiful, as well as excellent food fishes, and are caught in the channels near the city, being taken principally with the sea crawfish as bait, for they are all caught with hook and line. The larger smacks bring in kingfish, otherwise known as cero, or black-spotted Spanish mackerel,<sup>13</sup> a large and handsome fish weighing from five to fifteen pounds, almost equalling the real Spanish mackerel in flavor; they are usually taken by trolling off the keys. The fishermen are mostly "Conchs," who are by nature nearly amphibious, learning to fish, turtle, sponge and handle a boat almost as soon as they are able to walk, or at most, when old enough to wear pants. They are the descendants of the English settlers of the Bahama Islands, and have the cockney habit of changing the "w" to "v." Even a negro, born in the Bahamas, said to me one day:

"The veather ain't no good for fishin', an' the vater is too rough, and the vind too 'igh fur spongin'."

A number of large smacks regularly supply the Havana market with kingfish and red snappers. By leaving Key West about sundown they are in Havana by daylight the next morning. Had we not been pressed for time, or been in Key West a few weeks earlier, I should have made the run in one of these smacks.

The fruit and vegetables and products brought to Key West from the mainland and keys are always disposed of at auctions, which are held every morning, and are attended by the citizens as regularly as Northern people "go to market." If the supply of eatables is small, notions and other commodities are sold, for the average Key Wester is not happy without an auction.

We were shown every kindness, consideration and courtesy during our stay in Key West by Mr. and Mrs. Gwynn and their two charming

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<sup>13</sup>While the king, cero, and Spanish mackerel resemble each other and are closely related, they are not—as Henshall implies—the same fish.

daughters. These young ladies possessed all the advantages of a good and thorough education, being well versed in belles-lettres, music and painting, and were as refined and graceful as our Northern ladies, though they had never been away from their little island home, having been educated entirely at the convent of Key West.

We left Key West on Sunday afternoon, March 12, with a light easterly breeze, bound for Cape Sable, some sixty miles northeast, across Florida Bay. . . .