

several times destroyed all the groves, so that the crop is by no means a sure one."

"So the frost does come here," I said. "We have seen nothing of it; the thermometer has ranged from sixty-eight to seventy-eight ever since we arrived."

"They had snow in New York last week," said Aunt Di.

"It has melted, I think," said John. "At least I saw this item last evening in a New York paper: 'If the red sleigher thinks that he sleighs to-day, he is mistaken!'"

"Shades of Emerson and Brahma, defend us!" said Sara.

Then we all began to eat oranges, and make dripping spectacles of ourselves generally. I defy any one to be graceful, or even dainty, with an orange; it is a great, rich, generous, pulpy fruit, and you have got to eat it in a great, rich, generous, pulpy way. How we did enjoy those oranges under the glossy green and fragrant blossoms of the trees themselves! We gave it up then and there, and said openly that no bought Northern oranges could compare with them.

"I don't feel politically so much disturbed now about the cost of that sea-wall," said Sara, "if it keeps this orange grove from washing away. It is doing a sweet and noble duty in life, and herein is cause sufficient for its stony existence."

We strolled back to the town by another way, and crossed again the Maria Sanchez Creek.

"Observe how she meanders down the marsh, this fairy streamlet," I said, taking up a position on the stone culvert. "Observe how green are her rushes, how playful her little minnows, how martial her fiddler-crabs! O lost Maria! come back and tell your story. Were you sadly drowned in these overwhelming waves, or were you the first explorer of these marshes, pushing onward in your canoe with your eyes fixed on futurity?"

Nobody knew; so we went home. But in the evening John produced the following, which he said had been preserved in the archives of the town for centuries. "I have made a free translation, as you will see," he said; "but the original is in pure Castilian."

"THE LEGEND OF MARIA SANCHEZ CREEK."

"Maria Sanchez
Her dug-out launches,
And down the stream to catch some crabs she takes
her way,
A Spanish maiden,
With crabs well laden;
When evening falls she lifts her trawls to cross the
bay.

"Grim terror blanches
Maria Sanchez,
Who, not to put too fine a point, is rather brown;
A northern coming,
Already humming,
Doth bear away that Spanish mail—den far from town.

"Maria Sanchez,
Caught in the branches
That sweetly droop across a creek far down the
coast,

That calm spectator,
The alligator,
Doth spy, then wait to call his mate, who rules the
roast.

"She comes and crawches
Maria Sanchez,
While boat and crabs the gentle husband meekly
chews.

How *could* they eat her,
That *señorita*,
Whose story still doth make quite ill the Spanish
Muse?"

We heaped praises upon John's pure Castilian ode—all save the Professor, who undertook to criticise a little. "I have made something of a study of poetry," he began, "and I have noticed that much depends upon the selection of choice terms. For instance, in the first verse you make use of the local word 'dug-out.' Now in my opinion, 'craft' or 'canoe' would be better. You begin, if I remember correctly, in this way:

"'Maria Sanchez
Launches her dug-out—'"

"Oh no, Professor," said Sara; "this is it:

"'Maria Sanchez
Her dug-out launches.'"

"The same idea, I opine, Miss St. John," said the Professor, loftily.

"But the rhymes, Sir?"

The Professor had not noticed the rhymes; poetry should be above rhymes altogether, in his opinion.

The pleasant days passed, we sailed up and down the Matanzas, walked on the sea-wall, and sat in the little overhanging balcony, which, like all others in St. Augustine, was hung up on the side of the house like a cupboard without any support from below. Letters from home meanwhile brought tidings of snow and ice and storm, disasters by land and by sea. A lady friend, a new arrival, had visited the Ancient City forty years before, in the days of the *ancien régime*. "It is much changed," she said. "These modern houses springing up everywhere have altered the whole aspect of the town. I am glad I came back while there is still something left of the old time. Another five years and the last old wall will be torn down for a horrible paling fence. Forty years ago the town was largely Spanish or Moorish in its architecture. The houses were all built of coquina, with a blank wall toward the north, galleries running around a court-yard behind, where were flowers, vines, and a central fountain. The halls, with their stone arches, opened out into this greenery without doors of any kind, tropical fashion. Those were the proud days of St. Augustine; the old families reigned with undisputed sway; the slaves were well treated, hospitality was