

who have been not less than two years in the College, and may be retained for four years either at one of the English Universities, or while studying some learned or scientific profession or the Fine Arts. Old Dulwich boys have been remarkably successful as artists, perhaps because their tastes in that direction are fostered by familiarity with the pictures in the Dulwich Gallery.

The Charterhouse, though no longer in London, is not at any great distance from it, as the new buildings are at Godalming, in Surrey; and scholarships are so numerous that 60 out of the 500 boys receive a free education, and ten more receive £20 yearly towards their expenses. The annual capitation fee is £5, and that for tuition £25, but the moderateness of these terms is to some extent neutralised by the charge of £80 for board and lodging in some of the masters' houses, and £70 in others, as well as by the fact that the value of the scholarship is diminished by one-half if the holder resides with his parents or friends. But even then sufficient remains of both the senior and junior ones to completely cover the school expenses. The former are worth £85 a year, and are open to all pupils between fourteen and sixteen who have been at least one year in the school; the latter are good for £65 per annum, open to all boys between twelve and fourteen whether in the school or not. The examination for them takes place in the latter part of each July, and the subjects are Latin, French, English, and Arithmetic. The exhibitions tenable after leaving school are twenty in number, five being annually vacant. They are of £80 per annum, and may be held for four years at one of the Universities, or elsewhere in preparation for any profession or occupation subject to the approval of the governing body. So

many great and clever men have been *alumni* of this ancient foundation, which ranks as one of the nine great schools, that the very name of Carthusian is in itself a title of honour, and boys as well as men are always the better for having traditions to live up to.

The Merchant Taylors' School is also one of the nine, and occupies the site formerly occupied by the Charterhouse in the square of that name. Boys are admitted when over nine and under fourteen by presentations from members of the Court of Assistants of the Merchant Taylors' Company, but unless they can pass the entrance examination the presentation is forfeited. There are 500 boys, but only a small proportion of them can receive free education, as there are ten scholarships awarded annually by competition to those who have previously been at least one year in the school. The four senior ones are open to boys under sixteen, are worth £30 a year, and tenable so long as the holders remain in the school; and the six junior ones are open to boys under fourteen, and are of the value of £15, tenable for two years, or till the holder is elected to a senior scholarship. The ordinary expenses are twelve guineas a year in the lower, and fifteen in the upper school, so that the scholarships exactly cover them. This school is very rich in good exhibitions for Oxford and Cambridge, no less than twenty-six of them being to St. John's College, Oxford, besides several others.

The only free education in the Merchant Taylors' School at Great Crosby, where there is accommodation for 250 not under eight years of age, is afforded by the Harrison Scholarships, which are in the proportion of one to every ten boys, are awarded by the results of the school examinations, and exempt the holders from the prescribed tuition fees for two years.

ALLIGATOR-FARMING.

BY C. F. GORDON CUMMING, AUTHOR OF "HOW THE STORMY WAVES WERE CONQUERED," ETC.



AMONG the many curious new industries which from time to time are brought into existence by some quaint freak of fashion, few are more remarkable than the recently devised scheme of breeding alligators in some parts of the Southern States, with a view to supplying the market with their hides, for the

manufacture of the various articles now in such great demand.

Hitherto the supply has been somewhat irregular, being chiefly dependent on chance captures by men whose ordinary avocation is that of fishing up turtles from their holes beside streams and pools; and, considering the danger and difficulty of securing one of the monsters, there is small reason to wonder that the turtle-hunters generally prefer their own simpler work, especially as they rarely receive more than from one and a half to two dollars (*i.e.*, six or eight shillings) for the hide of a large alligator, which has involved a long day of hard work in the mere act of skinning the great reptile, after all the risk involved in his capture.

His flesh, however, is not altogether wasted; for, though not generally appreciated, the fishermen occasionally eat parts of it; and they say that the tail especially is by no means to be despised, as it resembles veal in appearance, and pork in taste (as

is natural, considering the nature of its food). Moreover, the alligator yields a considerable supply of oil, unfragrant as that of the "fulmar"* of our Western Isles, and equally prized as a valuable remedy for rheumatism.

The alligator-fisher finds his most remunerative business in the capture of newly-hatched, or rather, still juvenile reptiles. Great is the excitement when he discovers a nice little nursery party of about fifty scaly babies, from six inches to a foot in length, all basking in some shallow, sunny pool. Though sharp-toothed from their birth, they can be handled without danger, if only he can elude the vigilance of their keen-eyed old mother who is basking on the shore, or else buried in the mud, with only her eyes and nostrils in sight. (All the saurian species alike have the eyes and nostrils so raised above any other part of the head, that they can lie buried in the mud, observing their neighbours, without any fear of detection or exposing any vital part to the danger of a shot.)

Baby alligators of about twelve inches in length, when captured and brought to market, are bought by dealers at prices ranging from two to four dollars a dozen. The retail price is much higher, as it is very difficult to rear the creatures in captivity. In the case of larger individual specimens, the fishers receive an additional sum of from fifty cents to a dollar for each foot above a certain length.

It has recently occurred to the great American mind that, since these reptiles are now a recognised article of trade with a definite market value, it may pay to rear these as well as any other species of stock; and moreover, that the muddy shores of many a stagnant pool in the Southern States, which hitherto have been accounted worse than useless, breeding only fevers and pestilential miasmas beneath the blazing sun, may now be turned to account, and indeed become valuable property.

One of the pioneers in this new industry is Colonel Williams, who has commenced operations by stocking a large muddy pool at Spanish Fort. Being anxious to found a happy and contented family, he resolved to transport thither not young alligators only, but also their loving parents. The method adopted was as follows:—His men, having contrived to capture some young ones without alarming their mother (whose hiding-place they had detected), placed a strong noose in such a position that, in order to approach her family, she must necessarily run her head into the noose. They then induced the poor little captives to cry out, whereupon the good mother came to their rescue, but was immediately caught by the noose, and dragged round and round in the water till she was nearly choked. Another noose was then passed round her tail, and a wooden board slipped under her, to which she was firmly strapped, and launched on the stream, her head being attached to the boat in which her young ones had been placed. Thus she was towed along till her new abode was reached, and she and her family were invited to make themselves at home.

In less than a fortnight, Colonel Williams had stocked his pond with thirty-five alligators, several of which were about eight feet in length at the date of their capture—a very promising commencement for his experiment. It would be interesting to obtain some details of his commissariat arrangements for feeding this happy family, so as not unduly to endanger the lives of the neighbours' children.

Our American cousins having thus given us the example of breeding alligators for commercial purposes, there seems no reason why the monsters which infest the rivers of India, and the great forest-tanks of Ceylon, should not be turned to as good account as those of Florida. It has therefore been suggested that crocodile-farms should be established in India, with a view to supplying the demand for skins in the European market.

It would scarcely do to trench on such old-established rights as those of the sacred "muggers" at Kurrachee (for instance), where these hideous creatures are looked upon with something of the reverence accorded to their ancestral relations in old Egypt, and where they rise to the surface, at the call of their attendant faquir, ready to accept the food-offerings of the faithful. In other districts, however, commercial mugger-pools might very well be established, and in their secret hearts the most reverent Hindoos might not regret the destruction of a few of these sharp-toothed reptiles.

It may not be out of place here to notice how commonly Indian writers fall into the error of speaking of the grisly monsters which infest their rivers as "alligators." The fact is that the alligator or "caiman" is peculiar to America, and is found nowhere else, whereas the crocodile, properly so called, is common to Asia, Africa, and America.

The Indian rivers, however, have one species peculiar to themselves, namely, the "gavialis," which is known by the form of its jaws; these are long and thin, whereas those of the crocodile are blunt and thick, and those of the alligator are still more blunt. The heads of the two latter, however, elongate in old age, making the difference less apparent.

The crocodile is distinguished by the narrowness of the muzzle behind the nostrils, which is produced by a deep notch on the edge of the upper jaw, wherein rests the fourth tooth of the lower jaw, whereas the teeth of the alligator fit into a pit in the upper jaw, and the form of the head is a straight unbroken line down the muzzle.

To ordinary mortals the difference seems trifling, and even naturalists are not very clear in describing it. A more unmistakable difference lies in the fact that the hind legs of the crocodile are fringed with scales.

A very remarkable contrivance in the formation of these strange reptiles is that their throats contain valves of gristle, which acts as secure doors, only opening at will, so that no pressure of water can force down one drop while the monster holds in his open jaws the animal which he wishes to drown, and eat at leisure.

* Stormy petrel.