

The new chief-justice writes as badly the worst of his profession. The fault is old as Hamlet, who says—
 "I once did hold it, as our statists do,
 A baseness to write fair, and labored much
 How to forget that learning."
 —Transcrip

But Hamlet didn't forget it, after all, for when it became necessary, in the action of the play to add to his other crimes of stealing and murdering, he intercepted the mail, that of forgery, tells us

"I sat me down;
Devil'd a new commission; wrote it fair."
The experience of the last few years would lead us to the conclusion, that Hamlet, albeit a king's son, was brought - up to the purposes of trade, and so became by education a forger. Confidential clerks, secretaries, cashiers, and all those whose business requires "fair writ" become defrauders. Good writing and dishonesty frequently go hand in hand; bad chirography (such as is made up of ad-dicta, ad-facta, ad-justicia) is an

An Alligator Fight,

**A FLORIDA HISTORIAN'S ACCOUNT OF AN
EXTRAORDINARY BATTLE.**

Here the old man sounded his pockets, and drew up an ancient plug of tobacco. It was so moist that it appeared to have been fished out of a hoghead of molasses. The capt-

"Gators," continued he, "knows a hell more than a nigger. They've got some sense 'n' us takin' with each other, an' they know what's goin' on in the river better than the steamboat captain. Bless my buttons, chaps, I'm a gator myself, an' I know the river well. I sometimes think that 'he look up some old gator as a boss, or a kind a yabber. Bees has kings, an' why not 'gators? They must be a directin' spirit among 'em as 'sides the fact that 'sides sure's you're a gator, 'n' I'm a gator, 'n' we're all gators. Thirty years ago I kep' a gator house over there on Shell Mound. I hed forty niggers 'goin' milk all the time, an' I'll all the house was always full,' boards at the house, an' they went down four faddles of venison every day, an' paid me a dollar a day to hunt 'dur' or the boarsers."

"Loidy, thar use to be then any quant o' gators in the lake. Why, you could leave a fish in a boat five minutes but wha' gator: or a nigger would steal it. Well, kine in June I first begun to notice that somethin' was the matter with the gators. Thar wuz trouble among them. They seemed have fallen out about something. They acted excited and nervous like, and they generally got in the lake at night. Heard 'em most times the last time. I 'member one mornin' we went down to the big-ulphur spring run—y'bin thar yourself—an' we saw two gators with their tails up agin two palmetto tree standin' on thar prade, and more than

dozen gators in the water a lookin'. Another time I seen three gators asleep their backs in the sun side by side, and I er seen a gator sleepin' on his back before or since. I knowed something was de water. Why, bless you you'd see gators wif you never see 'em before. Old cussus had been in thar holes for years, left him and waddled around the lake, takin' a hie in the trouble. And it wuz jest so for fifty miles up and down the river. Sleight s'mat o' crawlin', an' clawin', swimmin', an' cussin' beat all thar wuz seen in Florida.

D. C. B. G. W. D. L. F. R. T.

"One night thar wuz a terrible time. B your butons, we couldn't sleep for the c. All the 'gators wuz turned loose an' a rail b-l. We could hear 'em roarin' up the river an' down the river, an' in the lake in front o' us. They shuck the air with their roars. You would have thought that every 'g wuz a tryin' to split his throat. Thar

no use in tryin' to sleep. We wuz all up
for some daylight, and could hear the 'gators
thrill around in the lake and shakie' the
up. At daybreak we could see 'em slasht
the foam on the 'ar at the mouth of the r
The 'gators a comin' down the river had
e 'gators comin' up, an' a big fight wuz
ing on. We could hear their jaws snap c
and the Sheil Man said—'thru three m
and at Mellenville they could hear the g
quantity o' 'gators. Thar must hev be
six hundred acres of 'em. They fought
the forenoon. Heaps of 'em were kiled,
the lake wuz kivered with blood. They
off each others' arms and legs, and in

awful noses when they wuz hurted. A u
at Mellonville told me that he seen
raise light up out of the water like two do
an' stand on their tails an' fight.

"Why, Lord bless your bottoms! so m
'gators floated ashore that it was nigh br
in' of a yellow fever. I luded it was
months afterward you could see 'ga
a-paddlin' around the lake with only a
arm. Some of 'em had their eyes bit
and war stone blind. One f'lar had a p
of his nose taken off, an' a big chunk bit
of his back. The boys felt mighty sorry
an, an' never wanted to shoot 'em no
man, under the lake to bever mark

Here the Captain pulled a rope hanging down at the side of the pilot-house. The boat blew her whistle and I took the wheel and left. As the Daylight steamed from the dock the captain bent himself to the wheel. Since then I have conversed with several old settlers, and they all bear witness to the truth of Captain Dvornak's story of the gator alligator fight. One of them showed me

About Rats.

Rather a repulsive subject, you will say, and yet there is interest to be derived from it. In times of general calamity, whether earthquakes, water, or fire, rats share the trouble of the time, and come forth in numbers from their secret haunts. Witness the great fires in Chicago, Boston, and New York: whole colonies of these marauding

were dispersed and destroyed, or could be seen fleeing to the wharves for protection. In France, the late inundation of the Seine which caused so many disasters, occasioned one of which there had been no expectation. In entering the sewers which opened into the river, the waters drove an immense number of rats, who were thus carried into the houses that stand upon the quays or in the neighborhood. The houses were completely abandoned by these horrible creatures. In the Rue Sainte Julien le Pauvre, in the district of the Bastille, there were one hundred and forty rats of enormous size destroyed. In times long past similar events have frequently occurred. In the year 18

There were terrible earthquakes in the countries on the borders of the Caspian Sea. From the depth of the abysses suddenly opened from the bosom of the mountain in the Caucasus what came forth? Rats which were like men, and fat, armed with formidable teeth, and with their long red hair had a terrible appearance. They were called "surmulki".

They advanced in immense battalions, their arrival in Askalon, in the autumn of 1271, was remarkable. Nothing stopped them, not even the sea. They were good swimmers. They often passed the Volga and the Danube in legions of the vessels, in which they possessed themselves. Others, rushed on the shore, there.

directions. A whole army moved simultaneously toward Siberia, and having surrounded the little town of Juikih, mastered it. The town was then taken by assault. The attack took place at four o'clock in the evening, and the quarter of the town was given up by the conquerors to the conquerors. The vessels lying in the Russian ports, on board which the mulots had taken free passage, returned to France, and the hungry rats were the first to disembark. At that time, the black rats were paramount in France; but twenty years later the surmulots were masters. The black rats cannot make head against this intrusive

stronger than he is, better armed with
and renewing; his legions three times a
by a birth of from twelve to twenty little
each time. He disappeared, and his e
ence is now one of the myths of the sev
of Paris and London.

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ey."—*Nicholas Longworth*.

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