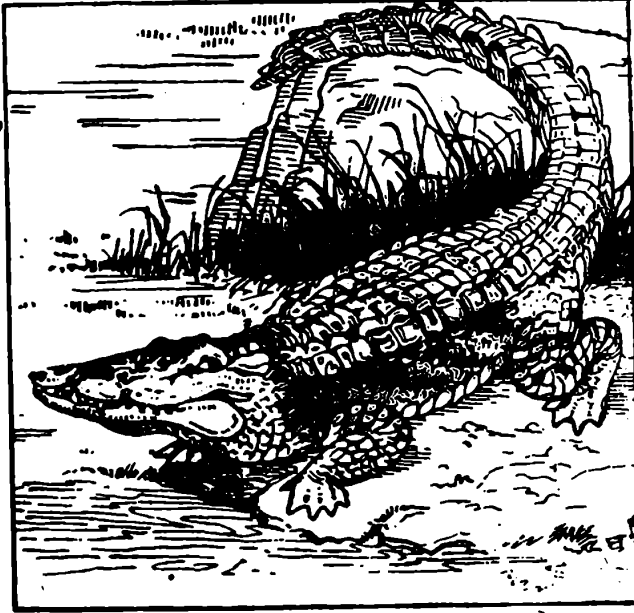


## ELEMENTARY SCIENCE SECTION

### THE ALLIGATOR AND THE CROCODILE



ONE of the ugliest and most formidable looking of all animals is the alligator, a large reptile which inhabits swamps and rivers. This hideous creature is found in many parts of the Philippines. It attains a length of 10 to 15 or even 20 feet.

Its strong, prominent, conical teeth may show even when the enormous mouth is shut, because the alligator has no lips. The teeth are designed for seizing prey, but not for chewing, for the food is gulped down whole. An adult alligator is capable of swallowing a large duck. Larger creatures are dragged down and drowned; then they are torn asunder with a twisting motion of the alligator's whole body.

The long, powerful tail enables the alligator to swim with skill and wonderful speed, but its short legs and unwieldy body make its movements on land slow and awkward. It feeds chiefly on crabs, shrimps, fish, and small reptiles, but will

devour anything from a small water beetle to a dog or pig or goat, or even a human being.

Alligators dig out caves in the banks of rivers and marshes, and take refuge there in time of danger.

The close relative of the alligator is the crocodile, and the two are often mistaken one for the other. Although the alligator is related to the crocodile of Asia and Africa, a close examination of the two will show that there are differences.

The alligator has a broader head and a blunter snout than the crocodile; it also has cavities or pits in the upper jaw into which the long sharp canine teeth of the jaw fit; its feet are much less webbed. The habits are less aquatic. These reptiles are most active during the night, when they make a loud bellowing.

The crocodile is formidable on account of its great size and strength, but on shore its shortness of limb, great length of body, and difficulty of turning enable men and animals to escape pursuit readily. In the water it is active and dangerous.

It is exclusively carnivorous (flesh-eating), and always prefers its food in a state of putrefaction (decay). This sinister monster eats not only fish, birds, dogs, cattle, ponies, and deer with relish, but devours its own relatives. Many a swimmer in tropical waters had felt the sudden grip of those long, sharp teeth as he has been jerked under, never to appear again.

*(Please turn to page 278.)*

### THE ALLIGATOR

(Continued from page 269)

There are nine species of true crocodiles, which are distinguished by the arrangement of their teeth. The nostrils of the crocodile are at the extremity of the snout, and are capable of being closed to prevent the ingress of water.

Crocodiles sometimes grow to a length of 30 feet or more, and apparently live to a vast age—sometimes two centuries or more, scientists believe. The Indian crocodile is the largest, and has been known to measure 33 feet in length.

The best known species is the crocodile of the Nile river in Egypt. It is still plentiful in upper Egypt. This lizard-like, flesh-eating reptile was worshipped by the ancient Egyptians.

All female alligators and crocodiles lay a great number of eggs (30 to 60) with hard, thick shells resembling hens' eggs. The nests are built near the water's edge. Leaves, twigs, and grasses, mixed with mud, are used. Although the eggs are hatched by the heat of the sun and of decaying vegetable matter, the mother watches the nest carefully.

Usually in eight weeks the young hatch out and make for the water. They

are about eight inches long at birth, and stay with their mother until they are strong enough to care for themselves. They grow rapidly into horny monsters. While they are young, they follow their mother about, squealing and grunting like puppies.

The alligator and the crocodile are covered by a tough skin and a dense armor of horny scales, impenetrable to a bullet. The hide makes valuable leather. These creatures are often hunted for their tough skins, from which handbags, suit-cases, pocket-books, etc. are manufactured.

In some parts of the world there are alligator "farms" where hundreds of alligators are raised for their hides. This might be developed into a profitable business in the Philippines, where conditions are ideal for an alligator "farm."

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. To what class of animals do the alligators and crocodiles belong? (Reptiles)
2. Can you tell from memory 10 interesting things about an alligator?
3. Can you tell 10 about a crocodile?

### USING LEFT-OVERS

(Continued from page 273)

and onion juice. Stir into one cup of drawn butter well thickened, and cook together until smoking hot. Add the yolk of a raw egg, and shape, crumb and fry. Serve with tomato sauce to which grated cheese has been added.

(To be continued)

### AGE OF CHIVALRY

(Continued from page 275)

turies beyond the age of chivalry, we can still retain the courteous and noble manners of that period, for true chivalry is always desirable, even now in this war-torn twentieth century.

### REVIEW

1. When did the "age of chivalry" flourish?
2. What did a knight and his horse wear sometimes?
3. Did boys ever wear a suit of armor? Tell about it.
4. Tell of the jousting tournaments. (See the encyclopedia.)
5. Tell of a page.
6. Tell of a squire.
7. Tell of the admission to knighthood.
8. Tell of the behavior of a knight.