

## THE FAMILY.

## TEMPERANCE—INTEMPERANCE.

## AN APPEAL.

A plague is stalking through our land,  
Smiting both old and young;  
And shall we sit with folded hands,  
Or try what can be done?

What can be done to save our youths  
From the accursed thing:  
Which prostrates all their energies,  
And binds in chains of sin?

It makes our firesides desolate,  
Fills loving hearts with care;  
It shuts the door of Paradise—  
No drunkard enters there.

Oh! for an arm to crush the fiend,  
To quell its baneful power;  
Heart, voice and hand, we all must raise,  
To make the demon cower.

Our steadfast prayers to Heaven we'll send,  
That God may help us try  
To check its course, to stop its growth,  
And raise the temperance cry;

That old and young in time may feel,  
The influence we will bring;  
To help them spurn it from their sight  
And crush the loathsome thing.

GEORGIE MORTON.

Milton, Queens County, N. S.

## THE HOME OF THE ALLIGATOR.

Remembering with vivid distinctness the interest and curiosity that marked my too fleeting childhood, when, as a little boy, I paddled in bare-foot, the terror of tadpoles, the streams in the vicinity of "my dear old home," or turned over stones and bits of wood in search of earth-worms with which to lure the unsuspecting trout or minnow from its shady home in the limpid stream, and not forgetting that, although my own childhood is a thing of the past, and the old home with its endearments has been exchanged for a life far away in the busy, bustling world, I desire to spend a few moments with the dear young readers of THE CHRISTIAN, relating to them some things concerning the strange, curious and interesting habits and nature of that amphibious monster, the alligator, of which they have already, it may be, some vague, imperfect idea. The native white Floridian, known in the State parlance as a "cracker," abbreviates alligator to "gator." I am quite confident that to a young Canadian, after the tropical fruits of this land of eternal summer, the "gator" would occupy the next place of interest in point of observation. Since Florida has become a resort for thousands, who, like Ponce de Leon, are in quest of the elixir of life and pleasure, the demand for almost everything pertaining to the "gator" is sought for eagerly. In the streets of Jacksonville tanks with "gators" of all sizes are to be seen, from the tiny baby to the monster of ten and twelve feet; ranging in price from twenty-five cents to as many dollars. While in curiosity shops and jewellery establishments "gators" teeth can be purchased, mounted in gold and make into all manner of pins, brooches, buttons, chains and bracelets, while dead alligators are mounted and made to occupy and assume grotesque and ridiculous positions, now holding out a tray of ware as if offering it to the purchasers and sometimes playing the role of a gentleman at ease with his wine and cigar. I have known of large alligators, mounted or alive, to be sold by those who make a business of dealing in curiosities, at a price ranging from ten to fifty dollars for live ones, and, perhaps, one-

half that sum for those who have passed through the art of the taxidermist. Alligators in some respects are very peculiar in their nature, and although living much the greater part of their time in the water, can live a long time out of it. They have also been known to live for months without eating anything of importance, although usually they have a voracious appetite. Catching, and sometimes even raising alligators might seem to some of my young readers a queer vocation; but many are engaged in just such a business and make no small amount of money by so doing. Alligators range in size according to age, from a few inches in babyhood to ten, twelve and one was recently seen near this city nearly twenty feet in length. They inhabit the lakes, rivers and swamps of this entire State in great numbers. The writer was out on a beautiful lake near Starke about one week since and from the centre of the lake counted as many as ten large alligators leisurely swimming with but a small portion of the head and back above the surface of the water. During the day I shot one at the distance of one hundred and fifty yards, with an English repeating rifle, and, as this was my first "gator," I felt as pleased as a little man in his first pants, and especially as an English gentleman in the boat pronounced it a very fine shot. They are hard to shoot, as this one was shot in the water, as they swim deep, only exposing the nose, the eyes, and at times very little of either, and the most that can be seen of them at such times is but a low, dark line in the distance. They are perfectly harmless except at close quarters, attacked then they make a good fight. They are very timid at times and it is with difficulty that one can be approached, unless when asleep basking on the banks at or near mid-day. They are very fond of hogs and dogs, and show a wonderful aptitude in catching these unwary animals. Woe to the dog, or hog, that on a sultry day attempts to lave his panting side in the cool waters of some adjacent lake or lagoon. Mr. "Gator" is on the watch, there is a sudden and tremendous lashing and splashing of the water, and the dog "Oh! where is he?" Horses are not infrequently mangled or destroyed by them, when, to quench their thirst, they inadvertently encroach upon the watery domain of this not-so-sleepy-as-he-looks inhabitant. There is, perhaps, no more dismal sound than to be in the vicinity of a large lake at this season of the year and listen to the deep bellowing of the male "gator" trumpeting his sullen challenge as he starts on some predatory excursion on the banks or marshes of the lake.

But perhaps the most interesting fact in connection with this half fish, half animal, is its nest. It seems a little peculiar that such a formed creature, builds a nest, lays eggs—and eggs that to the uninitiated would be taken for large duck, or goose-eggs. When an old alligator is about to make a nest, she selects a nice quiet place on the bank of some stream or lake, and then with the tail, their weapon and instrument of defence, she beats the ground down till it is smooth and flat, and she has formed a place about three or four feet in diameter. On this smooth place she lays from thirty to fifty eggs, and completely covers them with small twigs and dried grass and leaves; this done she covers the little heap with soft sticky clay, smoothing it nicely, so that when it dries in the sun the little hut is air-tight. She then leaves the work to the heat of the sun, while she keeps guard at, or near, the place, to protect and defend the nest from incursion. The place is watched with a motherly care for the space of about forty days, when to her experienced and instinctive ear there comes from the heap of dried and hard clay, the sound of a queer little sharp barking, as if a score or more of little puppies where there imprisoned. The mother knows at once that the eggs have hatched. She bites a hole through the clay and out come the lit-

tle baby "gators," and make a straight line for the water. Sometimes, the alligator-hunter or the tourist happens on the scene at such a time, and it is then an easy matter with a scoop-net to get a supply of young "gators," provided the captor keeps out of range of the mother's tail, who will most strenuously defend her young progeny, and one blow of her powerful tail will break the leg, or arm, and has been known to kill. But, perhaps, I have already told you enough for one time. I may have something more to say about our subject at another time.

T. H. BLENUS.

Jacksonville, Fla.

## CURRENT EVENTS.

## DOMESTIC.

The Halifax streets are to be lighted by electricity on and after Nov. 1st.

The population of Ottawa city increased by 2,066 during the past year—nearly eight per cent.

The potato crop in Picton county is said to be unusually large and of excellent quality this year.

It is thought that the last spike in the Canada Pacific Railway will be driven on 20th November.

From 1st to 25th of the present month there were 1,380 deaths from small pox in Montreal and suburbs.

Rev. Joseph Cook is to deliver three lectures in this city on the 9th, 10th and 11th November under the auspices of the Y. M. C. Association.

There are really no signs of small-pox abating in Montreal. It has broken out among the shantymen at the desert in Upper Gatineau Valley, and at one or two points along the Ontario frontier. In Ottawa compulsory vaccination is being enforced.

The potato crop over all parts of Cape Breton county is a most abundant one. In some cases the yield is four times greater than that of last year. Some of the farmers have not storage room for the large crop.

Henry G. Bell, of Milton, sent us a strawberry vine containing a full blown blossom, taken from his garden. James Shields, of the same place, picked a bunch of raspberries in his garden on Friday.—*Liverpool, N. S., Advance.*

The mortuary statistics of the principal cities and towns of the Dominion for September are: Montreal, 1,220 deaths; Toronto, 187; Quebec, 193; Halifax, 67; Hamilton, 53; Winnipeg, 37; Ottawa, 52; St. John, 59; Kingston, 33; Charlottetown, 15; Fredericton, 84. There were 829 deaths from small-pox in Montreal.

## UNITED STATES.

NEW YORK, Oct. 28.—The jury, in the case of Ferdiard Ward, of the late firm of Grant & Ward, late to-night returned a verdict of larceny in the first degree. The penalty is ten years within the discretion of the court. Sentence was deferred.

Jumbo's remains have arrived at the establishment of Prof. Ward, in Rochester, N. Y., where the skin, which is 3½ inches thick, and weighed 1,500 pounds when taken from the animal, is to be stuffed. Prof. Ward estimates the weight of the elephant, when alive, at six tons.

## FOREIGN.

Roumelia is a little state of only 850,000 inhabitants. Of these, 174,000 are Mahomedans, and only 43,000 are Greeks.

ST. PETERSBURG, Nov. 1.—Bloody fighting is reported at Baku, on the Caspian Sea, between the Moslems and Russians. The military had to be called out to restore order. In the fighting several Russians were killed and a large number wounded.

There are now established on the coast of Great Britain 184 life-boat stations. In the current year there were 3,764 casualties to shipping around the British Isles; 633 lives and eighteen vessels were saved, in addition to 189 lives by shore boats and other means, where rewards were given, being a total of 792 lives saved through the agency of the society. During the year life-boats were launched 252 times, and not one man of their crews was lost.