

I once thought of an application to parliament to regulate conversation by statute, but on further reflection I have relinquished the idea; fearing that from the nature of their own debates, and the little benefit resulting from some of them, that they would require such lengthy speeches from others, that would leave no time for transacting the ordinary affairs of life. But from pure regard to the rising generation, I have collected a number of excellent rules for the management of conversation. The Spectators, Guardians, and Tatlers of the last age, and some publications of the present day, have contributed their several quotas towards a work, which I thought of publishing, in three volumes quarto, at the very moderate price of THREE GUINEAS, in boards. But, on consulting my bookseller, I am discouraged from the attempt for three reasons: he informs me that, for a work of this description, I should meet with very few purchasers, still fewer readers, and SCARCELY ANY who would improve by its perusal. I shall therefore preserve the MSS. and leave directions to my family to have it published two hundred years hence, when, it may be hoped, the world will be better able to appreciate its value: till then only a few select portions shall be given to the readers of the Youths' Magazine. In a future paper I will give them some account of the TACITURNS.

Crito.

THE BOA CONSTRICTOR DEVOURING HIS PREY.

(From M'Leod's Voyage of H. M. S. Alceste.)

On board of the ship *Cæsar*, which had been engaged to bring back to England our late embassy to China, after the shipwreck of his Majesty's ship *Alceste*, there was also embarked a serpent of the Boa Constrictor species, which although sixteen feet long, and about a foot and a half in circumference, was considered to be but a small one of his kind. He is said to have been entertained with a live goat for dinner once in every three or four weeks, and occasionally with a duck or fowl by way of a dessert. He was brought on board shut up in a wooden crib or cage, the bars of which were sufficiently close to prevent his escape; and it had a sliding door, for the purpose of admitting his food. This crib was about four feet high and five feet square; a space sufficiently large to allow him to coil himself round with ease. The live stock for the use of this monster during his passage to England, consisting of six goats of the ordinary size, were sent on board with him, and considered as a fair allowance for as many months. At an early period of the voyage, says Mr. M'Leod, Surgeon of H. M. late ship *Alceste*, we had an exhibition of his talent in the way of eating, which was publicly performed on the quarter-deck, upon which he was brought. The sliding door being opened, one of the goats was thrust in, and the door of the serpent's cage again shut. The poor goat, as if instinctively aware of all the horrors of his situation, immediately began to utter the most piercing and distressing cries, butting instinctively at the same time towards the serpent in self defence. The serpent, which at first appeared scarcely to notice the poor animal, soon began to stir a little, and, turning his head towards the goat, at length fixed his deadly and malignant eye upon the victim, whose agony and terror seemed to increase; though he still continued butting at the serpent, who now became sufficiently animated to prepare for the

banquet. He first darted out his forked tongue, and rearing his head a little, suddenly seized the goat by the foreleg with his mouth, and throwing him down instantly encircled the poor animal in his horrid folds. This was so quickly done that even the eye could not follow the rapid convolution of the serpent's body. It was not a regular screw like turn that was formed, but resembled rather a knot, one part of the body overlaying the other, as if to add weight to the muscular pressure, the more effectually to crush his prey. He also continued to grasp with his mouth that part of the animal which he had first seized. The poor goat in the mean time continued its feeble and half stifled cries for some minutes, but they soon became more and more faint, and at last it expired. The snake, however, retained it for a considerable time in his grasp after it was apparently motionless, and at length began slowly and cautiously to unfold himself, till the goat fell from his monstrous embrace, when he began to prepare himself for the feast. Placing his mouth in front of the head of the dead animal, he commenced by licking over that part of the goat; and then taking its muzzle into his mouth (which had, and indeed always has, the appearance of a raw lacerated wound) he sucked it in, as far as the horns would allow. The stoppage here arose not so much from their extent as from their points, but in a very short time they were also sucked in, and could be traced very distinctly on the outside, threatening every moment to protrude through the skin. The victim was now swallowed as far as the shoulders; and it was an astonishing sight to observe the extraordinary action of the snake's muscles when stretched to such an unnatural extent. When his head and neck had no other appearance than that of a serpent's skin, stuffed almost to bursting, still the working of the muscles were evident, and unabated; this seemed to be the effect of a contractile muscular power, assisted by two rows of strong hooked teeth. With all this he must be so formed as to be able to suspend his respiration for a time, for it is impossible to conceive that the process of breathing could be carried on while the mouth and throat were so completely stuffed and expanded by the body of the goat. The whole operation of completely gorging the animal, occupied about two hours and twenty minutes: at the end of which time the tumefaction or swelling was confined to the middle part of the body or stomach, the mouth and throat having resumed their natural size. The reptile now coiled himself up again, and laid quietly in his usual torpid state for about three weeks or a month, when his last meal appearing to be completely dissolved, he was presented with another goat, which he devoured with equal facility. Few of those who witnessed his first meal wished to be present at the second.

It is impossible to behold without the most painful sensation, the anxiety and trepidation of the harmless victim, or to observe the hideous writhings of the serpent around his prey, and not to imagine what our own case would be in the same dreadful situation. Nor can we help thankfully reflecting upon the goodness of God to us, who has cast our happy lot in a country where we are not as the Africans, Asiatics, and South Americans are, exposed to the horrid ravages of such insidious and dreadful enemies.

Method of Destroying Tigers.—In Persia and the Northern parts of Hindoستان, the following method

of destroying tigers is said to be common: a large semispherical cage is made of strong Bamboos, or other efficient materials woven together, but leaving intervals throughout, of about three or four inches broad. Under this cover, which is fastened to the ground by means of pickets, in some place where tigers abound, a man provided with two or three short strong spears, takes post at night. Being accompanied by a dog which gives the alarm, or by a goat, which by its agitation answers the same purpose, the adventurer wraps himself up in his quilt, and very composedly goes to sleep in full confidence of his safety. When a tiger comes, and perhaps after smelling all around, begins to rear against the cage, the man stabs him with one of the spears through the interstices of the wicker work, and rarely fails to kill the animal, which is generally found dead at no great distance in the morning.

The unfortunate Sir Walter Raleigh, in the height of his prosperity, was exceedingly extravagant, for we find that he wore before her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, on a collar day at court, besides his sumptuous apparel as many pearls and precious stones on his shoes, as were valued at six thousand six hundred crowns.

POETRY.

HYMN FOR A CHILD.

Eccles. xii. 1.

O LORD! while life and hope are young,
And all are kind to me;
While strains of pleasure prompt my tongue,
Let me remember thee!

Where'er my wayward footsteps turn,
Whate'er mine eyes may see,
May I thy pow'r, thy love discern,
And, Lord, remember thee!

And when to man's estate I grow,
Though rich, though great I be,
May all my feelings heav'nward flow,
And I remember thee!

And oh! when evil days shall fall,
And health and comfort flee,
Midst sorrow's cloud and suff'ring's thrall,
May I remember thee!

And thus, till life itself shall end
And I'm from sin set free,
Greater! Father! Guardian! Friend!
May I remember thee!

THE TEST.

"Good Master! I follow where'er thou leadest."
Ah! thoughtless avowal of bold resolve!
But show, for such hazard, what motive thou pleadest,
What future designs dost thy breast revolve?

Does novelty lure thee to share in the fortune
Of him on whom scorn cheds but withering ray?
Does sympathy mildly thy feelings importune,
To soothe the full griefs of thy Lord away?

And know'st thou the fox a warm covert possesseth,
The birds of the heav'n a downy nest;
While the Son of the Highest, in all his distresses,
Hath no where a shelter, no home of rest!

Canst thou fearlessly look on the deep swelling ocean,
And equally smile on the raging tide
Of popular wrath and hostile commotion,
Which fain in its gulfs thy Redeemer would hide?

Canst thou calmly recline on the night's cheerless pillow,
While storms are awake o'er thy shelterless head,
And will not thy heart droop as low as the willow
To repose where the tempests of insult spread?

Bethink thee, adventurer, reckon the stages
Of such a career, for the men who display
A work incomplete, are the jest of all ages,
Their labor, a pastime for future days
Cornwall.