

Empress Octavia

receive in silence the king of the wilderness, the monarch of the desolate ravines of the Atlas Mountains, who so short a time ago watched for his prey on the rocky plateau and sprang boldly through the air to the neck of the giraffe, and now, with drooping head, slinks along close to the wall, snarling discontentedly. Then he lies down, raises his head with its floating mane, yawns, and licks his bristling lips with his red tongue; the yawning chasin of his jaws close, his eyes blink sleepily, he crosses his fore-paws and looks like a statue.

The walled ring gradually fills with animals from the desert, the forests, the mountains, the marshes; the gratings rattle constantly, the whips of the overseers crack; the people greet the savage guests with acclamations. The lithe Indian tiger steals spitefully around the auroch of Germany, the Northern bear scans with his little red eyes the sullen boar, the wolf licks his jaws hungrily with his hanging tongue, the serpent rolls itself into a coil, the Egyptian hyena, with its sinister green eyes, steals from one hiding-place to another. Timid gazelles tremble, ostriches fly, claws, hoofs, manes, tails, move in a strange medley, and, like an orchestra tuning its instruments before the concert begins, the beasts gathered