

which occupy an adjoining case; and are the largest serpents in the collection, were next supplied with two or three ducks. The largest python instantly seized one, and threw one fold round it. He then remained perfectly motionless, appearing to be satisfied with having secured the bird, and did not at once kill it. The duck did not seem at first much concerned at such unusual treatment, but soon became restless, on which the python tightened the fold, and in about a minute had quite destroyed it. Having waited for some minutes, as if to make sure that life was extinct, he slowly unwound his coil from the body, and touched it with his muzzle, moving it about till he had found the head. The idea of lubrication with saliva, now quite exploded, evidently arose from this habit of feeling over the body with the mouth. Having taken the head into his mouth, he began to swallow the carcass, his jaws stretching to an immense extent to allow of its passage. When he found any difficulty he used the part of his body which lay nearest to it to push it gently, and considering the apparent difficulty was not long in completing the meal. The supply of food is never stinted, and we believe that it is not uncommon for a python to devour six or eight ducks and rabbits on one day.

The colubrine snakes might with propriety be termed legless lizards, as, with the exception of the want of limbs, they are in most respects similar in structure to the saurians. A fine lively specimen of the Bengal ratsnake was fed with half a dozen frogs, which he pursued with great speed round the enclosure; and, driving them one by one into a corner, seized and swallowed them in spite of their struggles.

We will now turn to the venomous serpents, and in particular the rattlesnakes. The keeper having put two young guinea-pigs into the case, one of the snakes instantly struck at that nearest to him. The guinea-pig almost immediately showed signs of giddiness, but