

## FACE TO FACE WITH A BOA.

The boa constrictor has a long, scaly head, which is broad behind, and the tail has a single row of subcaudal scales. They are aboreal, and watch for their prey, swooping down on its head first, seizing and coiling their long and stout body around it. They reach twelve feet in length as a rule, and it is said that some are more than twice as long, but there are grave doubts about the truth of the statement. The ornamentation is rather peculiar, and there is a long series of markings extending the whole length, composed alternately of great blackish stains or spots irregularly hexagonal, and of pale, oval stains or spots notched or jagged at either end, the whole forming a very elegant pattern. It has the habits of the family, and is restricted to the tropical parts of South America. Probably this was the snake which was worshipped by the natives, and it has a strange literature attached to it of stories of the most wonderful kind, and it has been confounded with the anaconda, which forms the next genus of the sub-family. Bates once, on an insect-hunting expedition, met a boa constrictor face to face. The huge serpent was coming down a slope, and making the dry twigs crack and fly with its weight, as it moved over them. He knew there was no danger, and stood his ground, and the reptile suddenly turned and glided at an accelerated pace down the path. The rapidly-moving and shining body looked like a stream of brown liquid flowing over the thick bed of fallen leaves rather than a serpent with a skin of varied colours. One morning, after a night of deluging rain at Para, the lamplighter, on his rounds to extinguish the lamps, knocked Bates up to show him a boa constrictor he had just killed in the street not far off. He had cut it nearly in two with his knife as it was making its way down the sandy street.

## DEFOE'S DIARY VINDICATED.

One of the most curious illustrations of Japanese progress lately noted is the presence in the weekly abstract of sanitary reports issued by the Marine Hospital Service of an able and elaborate report relative to the plague in China by Professor S. Kitasato, who was sent to Hong Kong by the Japanese Government to study the etiology of the plague by modern methods. Dr. Kitasato, with great courage and the most careful minuteness of research, appears to have studied the characteristics of the bubonic plague in the most satisfactory manner, and he has clearly established by bacteriological observations that the disease owes its origin to a bacillus, the presence of which can be detected in the blood, in the glandular swellings, and in the spleen and other internal organs of the victims. In the course of his researches he drew blood from the finger tips of dying victims, and examined it under the microscope, and participated in numerous *post-mortem* examinations, and made experiments on animals with cultivations of the bacilli thus obtained. One singular result of his investigation is an explanation of the hitherto scarcely credited statement, which has come down to us from the days of Daniel Defoe and his "Diary of the Plague of London," that in visitations of this peculiar character mice and rats emerge from their holes and drop dead. This was supposed to be the result of some miasmatic fever accompanying the plague. Dr. Kitasato gathered up quantities of dust from the floors of the infected houses in Hong Kong and administered that dust to rats and mice. In nearly every case the result was fatal. Some of the animals died from tetanus, others with distinct plague symptoms, and the same bacilli were found in their internal organs as in those of the plague patients who had succumbed. Dr. Kitasato described the bacilli as resembling, in some respects, the bacilli of chicken cholera. —*London Public Opinion.*

Still another type of warship is to be added to the British navy in the "fleet cruisers" ordered for next year at a cost of a million dollars apiece. They are to be 270 feet in length, 40 in breadth, with a draught of 16 feet; their engines must develop 10,000 horse-power and a speed of 22 knots. The armament will consist of quick-firing and maxim guns and Whitehead torpedoes only, as they are intended mainly for scouting service.

## Public Opinion.

The Millbrook Reporter: THE WEEK, Toronto, has changed hands and under the new management comes to hand bedecked in new type and paper, and with the promise of further improvements in editorial and other reading matter. THE WEEK has always been the most welcome caller to our desk, and if the new management succeed in their promised improvements, we bespeak for it a much wider circulation. It fully takes the place of the magazine in the library of the busy man and its discussion of current topics in politics, science, art and literature has always been with fairness and frankness. We most heartily recommend it to our readers as the best journal of the kind.

Montreal Gazette: A Russian fleet passing from the Black Sea through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean will be enough to make the bones of some dead English worthies turn in their graves. In Disraeli's time England went to the verge of war for the purpose of keeping Russia out of the Mediterranean, and the intention was that that power should keep to the Black Sea, which is now more than half surrounded by Russian territory. It has been recognized for some time, however, that Russia would not long submit to the bonds upon her freedom of action, and the time is evidently near at hand for a change. Probably when it comes the world will be surprised at the smallness of the effect.

The Toronto Globe: In the current number of THE WEEK it is announced that the journal has passed into the hands of The Week Publishing Company (Limited). New type and improved paper are the first results of the new ownership, and it is promised that a fortnight hence, the opening of the twelfth year of publication, there will be marked changes in the literary and editorial columns of the paper. THE WEEK's treatment of current political and other topics has been scholarly, fair and dignified, and, judging from the present tendency of political thought and opinion, its field for usefulness is widening. It is on the literary side that most Canadian publications have experienced difficulty. There is no lack of literary talent, but the best work usually finds its way into American magazines. Probably for those financial reasons which few writers can afford to despise. The changes hinted at in THE WEEK will be awaited with much interest.

Ottawa Citizen: Mr. Pope has brought to the task that he has accomplished literary talents of a high order. The industrious and painstaking care with which he has mastered all the facts are no more conspicuous than the excellent judgement with which he has chosen what to publish and what to omit. He had, no doubt, material enough to have filled a library, and yet in these two volumes he has given, as far as one can see, everything that was needed to make his portrait of the first and greatest of colonial statesmen complete, accurate and vivid. The arrangement of the subject matter is excellent. The style is clear, vigorous and sparkling. The author has avoided the danger of being diffuse. Indeed, his temptations were in the other direction, for he has been compelled to pack much matter into small space. Yet he is terse without being obscure, and he possesses a fund of humour and at times of gentle satire which add greatly to the pleasure of reading the work.

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REV. P. C. HEADLEY, 697 Huntington Avenue, Boston, U.S.A., April 2nd, 1894, writes:

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and Manly Vigor, Nervous Debility, Paralysis, or Palsy, Organic Weakness and wasting Drains upon the system, resulting in dullness of mental Faculties, Impaired Memory, Low Spirits, Morose or Irritable Temper, fear of impending calamity, and a thousand and one derangements of both body and mind result from pernicious secret practices, often indulged in by the young, through ignorance of their ruinous consequences. To reach, re-claim and restore such unfortunates to health and happiness, is the aim of an association of medical gentlemen who have prepared a book, written in plain but chaste language, treating of the nature, symptoms and curability, by home treatment, of such diseases. The World's Dispensary Medical Association, Proprietors of the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., will, on receipt of this notice, with 10 cents (in stamps for postage) mail, sealed in plain envelope, a copy of this useful book. It should be read by every young man, parent and guardian in the land.

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It appears certainly true of the late Rev C. H. Spurgeon that his works live after him. His publishers report that the demand for his sermons continues to increase, notwithstanding that this is the fortieth year of publication, and that there are yet as many unpublished sermons as will require another ten years to get out.

Miranda's Liniment Cures Garget in Cows.