

STRUGGLE BETWEEN SOUTH AMERICAN MONSTERS.

SOUTH AMERICAN snakes bear about the same proportion to North American serpents that a black snake bears to an angworm. It is true that there are some small, and, I may add, extremely venomous reptiles there, too. But the characteristic snake is the boa, of which there are found no less than eleven varieties.

These huge reptiles range in length from twenty to thirty feet and are thirty inches in circumference—a cart-load of sinuous coils. According to the natives, the swallowing capacity of these reptiles is almost unlimited.

Boas are not venomous and do not depend upon their teeth to capture their prey. Neither do they droop in a coil from the branches, holding on by their tails, while watching for a victim, as we so often see them pictured. When a boa attacks his prey he instantly ties himself around it in loops resembling what sailors call 'math-walker,' hiding his head in the midst of the coils to keep it out of danger.

Going into a swampy place one day to look for game, as I parted the vines my hand touched some cold object, which made a shudder creep down my back. I had laid my hand upon a coil of the largest boa it was ever my fortune to encounter. As usual, its head could not be located—it always keeps that hidden among its coils out of harm's way—but it was doubtless watching me. Luckily, it happened to be cloyed on fish and indisposed to action. I finally succeeded in shooting it, and the creature measured twenty-nine feet from tip to tip.

One morning my companion came into camp dragging a twenty-footer, which he had found occupying the same bed with him. He had made a 'blind' in the tall grass and rushes and had laid himself comfortably down to wait for game, when suddenly he became aware of something moving under him. He sprang to his feet and found that he had been audaciously reposing on the tail of this huge boa, which naturally resented being used as a bolster.

But there was one spectacle which met my eyes in that teeming tropical forest that surpassed anything which I had ever heard or read of. If I had stumbled upon a combat between the dragon and griffin of ancient fable it would hardly have been more startling.

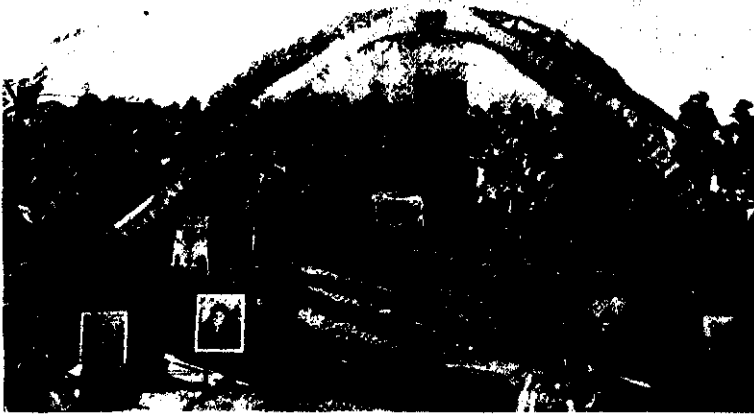
We were growing tired of venison, and as numerous teal and other wild ducks were flying about a nearby lagoon I decided to secure some to vary our diet. I took my Winchester as well as my shot gun, for one never knows when he might be pounced upon by a jaguar in these wilds, and his hard skull is proof against buckshot, except at perilously short range. Arriving near the water, I secreted myself behind a clump of banana plants and waited the approach of the fowl. I was just raising my gun to shoot when suddenly they whirled away out of range, uttering their characteristic 'peeping' cry. Then, looking out from my hiding place, I discovered the cause of their strange actions.

About fifty yards away I saw an alligator about seven feet long lying in the shallow water, looking as complacent and indifferent as only an alligator can look. Apparently keeping him company was a large boa, a single coil of which was visible above the middle of the alligator's back.

The next instant the boa knotted itself several times around his victim in so firm an embrace that it could not move a muscle. The saurian's jaws were thrown wide open, and its legs and claws were spread to their fullest extent as it lay helpless in that terrible embrace. The boa slid along his coils until he could pass his tail under the alligator's throat, and dipping the end under a knotted coil which encircled the alligator's body began to draw his victim's head downward into the water. Evidently he knew that he had a tough customer to deal with, and concluded to supplement squeezing with drowning.

At last a tongue flashed out between the folds; then the end of the nose came into view, and the head was slowly and cautiously pushed forward. As soon as the eyes came in sight, though they were still some inches under water, a heavy charge from my rifle was planted between them.

The monster at once relaxed the coils and went tumbling and writhing about, furiously lashing the water. I hastened out of the reach of its struggles, giving little thought to the alligator, which I took for granted was quite dead. Imagine, therefore, my surprise, to see him go scuttling off on the surface of the water—a very unusual position for one of his kind. Nor did he stop when he reached the opposite bank, but squirmed over it and on into the forest, and the cracking and crashing he made through the underbrush seemed to indicate that he proposed to vacate that particular spot forever.



A THEOSOPHICAL INSTITUTE

NEAR the San Diego, in California, a section of the followers of Madame Blavatsky have laid the corner-stone of a 'School for the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity.' At the head of this enterprise is Mrs Katherine A. Tingley, who has recently returned from a pilgrimage around the world in search of knowledge, and incidentally also for the purpose of uniting the followers of the late W. Q. Judge, who since the death of Madame Blavatsky have divided their allegiance, some of them having remained under the leadership of Colonel Olcott. This picture shows the ceremony of laying the corner-stone.

A WELL-KNOWN BOSTONIAN.

JOE, the gifted and affable orang-outang who has been holding popular receptions at the Boston Zoo, has made a great many friends in that city. He has also received some flattering press notices—which, it is only just to say, his real qualities fully merit. We are indebted to his managers, through the courtesy of Mr William Grant James, of the Boston Budget, for the lifelike photographs here reproduced. They cannot be called speaking likenesses, because Joe cannot talk. That is about the only human trait of which he is shy—and some cynics regard this lack as a negative virtue. But, while Joe says nothing, his imitative faculty is surprisingly developed. He dresses

and undresses himself, lights and smokes a pipe, drinks from a glass, rides a bicycle, and eats from a spoon. He has also acquired other human-like ways, as the accompanying illustrations attest.

A feature worthy of note about Joe is the fact that though he has certain times for giving exhibitions, he is fully as interesting during his leisure moments. In other words, he is no poseur. He is very much like a child at these times, and though his object is to amuse himself, he is all the time amusing the lookers-on very much more. He has his playthings about him and sits on the floor. Like a baby, he wants to put everything within reach in his mouth. He is more inclined towards carpentering than anything else.

Joe is very fond of his master, and, while occasionally refractory, can always be induced to yield to 'reason.'



JOE AND HIS MASTER.



MEDITATION.



RESTAURATION.



DISSIPATION.



RECREATION.