

which they have been for weeks, nay, sometimes for months, in patient expectation of; and the fortunate capture of an hour is often sufficient to serve them for the period of their annual activity. Their prey continues for a long time, partly in the stomach, partly in the gullet; and a part is often seen hanging out of the mouth. In this manner it digests by degrees; and in proportion as the part below is dissolved, the part above is taken in. It is not therefore till this tedious operation is entirely performed, that the serpent renews its appetite and its activity. But should any accident prevent it from issuing once more from its cell, it still can continue to bear famine for weeks, months, nay, for years together. Vipers are often kept in boxes for six or eight months, without any food whatever; and there are little serpents sometimes sent over to Europe, from Grand Cairo, that live for several years in glasses, and never eat at all, nor even stain the glass with their excrement. Thus the serpent tribe unite in themselves two very opposite qualities; wonderful abstinence, and yet incredible rapacity.

With respect to the voices of these animals, some of them have a peculiar shriek, and some