

IX. *A Continuation of an Account of an Essay towards a Natural History of Carolina and the Bahama Islands. By Mark Catesby, F. R. S. with some Extracts out of the Eighth Set. By Dr. Mortimer, Secr. R. S.*

**A**N Account of the preceeding Set is printed in N<sup>o</sup> 438. of these *Transactions*. Our Author begins this eighth Set with the forty-first Plate of his Second Volume ; and, as in this Set he treats chiefly of Serpents, he hath, by way of Introduction, given a short Account of the Serpents in general of these Countries : He saith, that in *Carolina* he hath seen about 18 Sorts of Serpents, whereof only four are of the Viper Kind, the others of the Snake Kind. Besides the different Manner in which Vipers and Snakes produce their young, he gives some external Marks whereby, at first Sight, one may judge to which of the two Sorts any Serpent belongs. Vipers have long hollow Fangs or Tusks, with an Opening near the Point through which they emit their Venom when they bite ; these Fangs are articulated to the Jaw, and lie flat when the Viper is not provoked, or hath no Intention to bite ; for though his Jaws are full of small Teeth, they do not seem intended for chewing, but only as so many Beards, like those on a Fish-hook or Arrow, to prevent their Prey, when any Part of it is in their Mouth, from getting back again. Vipers are of an ugly terrible Aspect, their Heads are broad, and

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their Cheeks wide, their Necks small, but when irritated they can swell them out ; their Bodies are, in proportion, shorter and thicker, their Scales rougher, and they are slower of Motion. Snakes are of a pleasant, harmless Aspect, their Heads small, and Necks as thick as the Head, their Bodies long and slender, their Scales smooth, and they are nimbler of Motion ; their Jaws are full of small Teeth, the same as the Viper's, excepting the Tusks. The Tongues of both Sorts are a-like, being forked, which Form is the best for catching Insects, on which they both feed as well as on larger Animals.

Our Author begins his first Plate of this Set, with the Figure of the

41. *Vipera caudifona Americana* : The Rattle-Snake. Our Author saith, that this Species is the largest, and therefore the most venomous of any of the Viper Kind ; the largest he ever saw was of 8 Feet, and weighed 8 or 9 Pounds. They often come into Yards, where they put all the Domestick Animals in great Consternation, nay, sometimes, they get into the very Houses, and one was found between the Sheets in a Bed soon after the Person had left it. Nothing hath yet been found as a certain Cure for the Bite of this horrible Creature ; cutting out the Flesh where the Wound is, and searing it, seems to be the surest Method. He saith, the Charming of other Creatures, attributed to this Snake, is generally believed in *America* ; but I shall say nothing more of it here, referring the curious Reader to the Account our learned President, Sir *Hans Sloane*, hath communicated to this *Society*, on that Head, in *Transactions*, N<sup>o</sup> 433.

Not having before met with so particular a Description of the Rattle; which this Sort of Vipers carries at their Tails, I shall transcribe his Words.

“ The Rattle is of a brown Colour, composed of  
 “ several horney membranous Cells of an undulated  
 “ pyramidal Figure, which are articulated one with-  
 “ in the other, so that the Point of the first Cell  
 “ reaches as far as the Basis, or protuberant Ring  
 “ of the third, and so on ; which Articulation be-  
 “ ing very loose, gives Liberty to the Parts of the  
 “ Cells, that are inclosed within the outward Rings,  
 “ to strike against the Sides of them, and so to cause  
 “ the rattling Noise, which is heard when the  
 “ Snake shakes its Tail. In the Plate is delineated  
 “ the Section of one of these Rattles, and likewise  
 “ one of them entire with 24 Joints; and on the  
 “ other Side is a large Fang or Tusk.”

42. *Vipera caudifona Americana minor*: The small Rattle-Snake. Our Author is not certain whether this be of a different Species from the preceeding; its Difference of Size and Colour being possibly owing to Difference of Age, and the Change of its *Exuviae*; for he says, that he hath often observed that the same Snake, on changing its Skin, hath been of very different Colours from what it was before. He thinks it to be a Mistake, that Rattle-Snakes have as many Joints in their Rattles, as they are Years old. To this Serpent are joined the Figures of two Plants.

*Frutex, foliis oblongis serratis alternis ; Aca-  
 cia floribus luteis ; fructu brevi, calyculato vi-  
 ridi.*

*Acacia, Buxi foliis rotundioribus ; floribus albis ; siliqua lata compressa.* This Tree affords an excellent Wood for Joyners Work. It is, mistakenly, called *Mahogany* by the *Bahamans* ; it is next in Beauty to what is here called *Madera*, which is the *Mahogany* of *Jamaica*.

43. *Vipera Aquatica* : The Water-Viper. These Serpents are commonly found hanging on Branches of Trees, which lean over Rivers, into which they plunge after Fish, which they catch and carry to Shoar. This Sort is commonly called in *Carolina*, the Water Rattle-Snake, not that it hath a Rattle, but from the Likeness of its Colour, and its Bite being as mortal. Its Tail terminates in a sharp pointed Horn, which, by the credulous, is thought likewise to be venomous, and that a Tree wounded with it will die ; but this is without Foundation.

*Frutex, foliis serratis, floribus longioribus spicatis subviridibus, capsula pentagona.*

44. *Vipera nigra* : The black Viper.

*Arbor foliis pinnatis, spica pendula sericea, Alpin. p. 2.*

45. *Vipera fusca* : The brown Viper in *Virginia* : In *Carolina* it is called the *Truncheon-Snake*.

*Arum maximum Ægyptiacum* quod vulgò *Colocasia* C. Bauh. pin. p. 195. *Sloane Hist. Jamaic. Vol. I. p. 166. Arum Ægyptiacum* F. Column. *Ecphras. Part II. p. 1.*

Our Author refers his Readers to Sir *Hans Sloane's* ample Description of this useful Plant, in his *Natural History of Jamaica*, Vol. I. p. 166. to which

which he only adds, that they are very acrimonious till boiled 8 or 9 Hours, and then become eatable, and taste much like common *Potatoes*. There is since introduced into *Carolina*, another Sort which is not acrimonious, but may be eat even raw ; these Roots are here the chief Food of the Slaves ; they come originally from *Africa*.

46. *Anguis, Ventre Cuprei coloris* : The Copper-bellied Snake.

*An Ricinoides Æleagni folio ?* The *Ilathera* Bark. The Bark of this Tree being burnt, yields a fine Perfume ; infused either in Wine or Water, it gives a grateful aromatick Bitter. This is called *Cortex Eleutheriæ* by others ; taking its Name from one of the *Bahama* Islands, corruptly called *Ilathera* instead of *Eleutheria*, or *Liberty-Island*, from the Greek Word *ελευθεριον*, *liber*, free.

47. *Anguis gracilis, cæruleo-viridis* : The bluish-green Snake. It is found chiefly on Trees.

*Frutex baccifer, verticillatus ; foliis scabris, latis dentatis, ♂ conjugatis ; baccis purpureis, densè congestis.*

48. *Anguis niger* : The black Snake. These Snakes are very beneficial in killing Rats, which they pursue in all Parts of Buildings.

*Frutex, Rubo similis, non spinosus, capreolatus ; fructu racemoso, cæruleo, Mori-formi.*

49. *Anguis minor fuscus maculatus* : The little brown Snake. These Snakes generally live under Ground.

*Corallo-*

*Corallo-dendron humile ; spica florum longissima, coccinea ; radice crassissima.*

50. *Anguis gracilis, fuscus* : The Ribbon-Snake.

*Arbor baccifera, Laurifolia, aromatica, fructu viridi, calyculato, racemoso.* Sloane's Hist. Jam. Vol. II. p. 87. *Cortex Winteranus* Offic. Winter's Bark. Our Author agrees with Sir Hans Sloane, that this is not the true *Winter's Bark*, altho' it hath obtain'd the Name, and is used as such.

51. *Anguis gracilis maculatus* : The spotted Ribbon-Snake.

*Pseudo-santalum, croceum.* Sloane's Hist. Jam. Vol. II. p. 184. Brasiletto. This Wood is used in Dying, but the Demand for it having been great, the *Bahama* Islands are almost clear'd of it.

*Flos Passionis minimus, trilobatus ; flore subæruleo.*

52. *Anguis annulatus* : The Chain-Snake.

*Frutex, Lauri longiore folio.*

53. *Anguis viridis maculatus* : The green spotted Snake. The Author doubts whether this is not the same with the spotted Ribbon-Snake, p. 51.

*Apocynum scandens ; salicis folio ; flore amplo, pleno.*

54. *Anguis Flagelli-formis* : The Coach-whip Snake; so called from its being very long and slender like a Coach-whip. The *Indians* foolishly believe that one of these Snakes can, with a Jerk of its Tail, cut a Man asunder.

*Lychnis viscosa Virginiana* ; flore amplo, coccineo ; seu *Muscipula Regia*. D. Banister  
Phytograph. Tab. 203. Fig. 1.

55. *Anguis è rubro & albo varius* . The Corn-Snake. This takes its Name from the Resemblance of its Colour to that of *Maize* or *Indian Corn*.

*Viscum Caryophylloides ramosum* ; floribus minimis albis. This is a Bulbous Plant, like a *Narcissus*, and grows sometimes on the bare Rocks in the *Bahama* Islands ; but being most commonly a *Parasite* Plant, the Author hath given it the Name of *Viscum*.

56. *Anguis capite Viperino* : The Hog-Nose Snake. The Author suspects this to be of the *Viper* Kind, altho' in one of them he could find no Fangs

*Lilium, sive Martagon Canadense* ; flore luteo, punctato. Acad. Reg. Paris. The *Martagon*. The Plate exhibits the Flowers of two Sorts ; the largest of which is growing in Mr. *Collinson's* Garden.

57. *Anguis viridis* : The green Snake.

*Cassena vera* Floridanorum ; *Arbuscula baccifera Alaterni facie, foliis alternatim sitis ; Tetrapylene*. Pluk. Mantiss. The *Cassena*. This is the Plant of which the *Indians* make a beloved Decoction, which they drink in great Quantities, even till it becomes Emetick. They have an annual Custom of drinking it in the Spring with great Ceremony, from the King down to the lowest Subject, and even Children ; at which time they burn all the old Furniture of their Houses. They say it restores lost Appetite, strengthens the Stomach, and gives them Agility and Courage in War, &c.

In *North-Carolina* and *Virginia* it is called *Yapon*, and is used by the *English*; and our Author thinks it the same Plant as the *Paraguay* Tea, which comes from *Buenos Ayres*.

58. *Anguis æ caruleo & albo varius*. The *Wampam* Snake; so called from the Resemblance it hath in its Colours to the *Wampam*, or *Indian* Money, made of Pieces of Shells blue and white, strung together.

*Lilium Carolinianum*; flore croceo, punctato, Petalis longioribus, & angustioribus: The red Lilly.

59. *Cæcilia maculata*: The Glass-Snake.

*Chrysanthemum Americanum*, *Doronici folio*, flore floris *Mali Persicæ* colore; umbone magno prominente ex atro purpureo, viridi & Auro fulgente: This Plant hath flower'd in *England*.

60. *Anguis niger, maculis rubris & luteis eleganter varius*: The Bead-Snake. They are commonly found under Ground.

*Convolvulus; radice tuberosa, esculenta*. Sloane's Hist. *Jamaic*. Vol. I. p. 150. The *Virginian* Potato. The Roots of these Plants are the principal Subsistence of the greater Part of *Africa*, and the southern Parts of *Asia*, as well as most of the People, both black and white, in the Colonies in *America*. The Author enumerates five Kinds: the common *Potato*, the *Bermudas*, the *Brimstone*, the *Carrot*, and *Claret Potatoes*, each of which he gives Descriptions of.

F I N I S.

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