ter it has been long kept : they have been posseſſed of this fatal ſecret for ages paſt ; it being their cuſtom to tinge the points of their arrows with the juice of ſpurge, putrid fleſh, or oil of tobacco, but more particularly with the poiſon of vipers. Some modern Indians con­tinue the practice to this day ; and we have the teſtimony of Pliny, in his Natural Hiſtory, that the Scy­thians had long ago the ſame cuſtom : “ The Scythians (ſays that author) dip their arrows in the poiſon of vi­pers and human blood ; a horrid practice, as the ſlighteſt wound inflicted by one of them defies till the art of medicine.”

The poiſon of ſerpents produces fatal effects only by mixing with the blood. To confirm this principle, the Florentine philoſophers collected a quantity of poiſon, and gave it to different animals without producing the leaſt inconvenience ; but when applied to an external wound, every one of thoſe horrid ſymptoms which ac­company the real bite followed, viz. inflammatory and malignant fevers, ending in death, unleſs nature, by a ſpontaneous hemorrhage, or ſome other evacuation, diſcharged this poiſon. With reſpect to the experiments of Rhedi, evcry one of his obſervations prove, that the liquid preſſed out of the veſicle which moiſtens the fangs of the ſerpents is only noxious by being convey­ed into the blood, by means of a puncture or wound ; and the caſe of Tozzi, who drank a conſiderable quan­tity of this poiſon without ſuffering injury, proves that it hurts the blood only when externally mixed with it.

The ſymptoms of the bite of the viper have already been deſcribed under Medicine, n⁰ 408. with the cures recommended by Dr Mead for the bite of ſerpents in general. Under the article Poison, p. 269. we have mentioned the Abbé Fontana’s method of cure, *viz.* li­gatures, and the beneficial effects of the volatile alkali. We ſhall now therefore ſupply what has been omitted in theſe articles, by deſcribing the ſymptoms which ac­company the bite of other ſerpents.

The ſymptoms attending the bite of the *coluber preſter,* a native of Sweden, are, pain in the wound, tumor, thirſt, aſthma, anxieties, convulſions, and death.

There is a ſerpent ſtill more dreadful than any of the former, found in Sweden, called *coluber careia.* The bite of this is followed by immediate change of colour, coldneſs, ſtupor, palpitation of the heart, acute pain all over the body, and death. Linnaeus tried oil in this caſe, but it proved ineffectual.

The cr*otalus horridus* of Linnaeus, the rattleſnake, kills in a very ſudden manner ; his bite uſually produ­cing death within twelve hours.

The following account of the poiſon ſerpent of the Eaſt Indies is given by M. d’Obſonville. “ Among the ſerpents of India, that which I believe to be most for­midable is but about two feet long, and very ſmall. Its ſkin is freckled with little traits of brown or pale red, and contraſted with a ground of dirty yellow : it is moſtly found in dry and rocky places, and its bite mor­tal in less than one or two minutes. In the year 1759, and in the province of Cadapet, I ſaw ſeveral inſtances of it ; and among others, one very ſingular, in the midſt of a corps of troops commanded by M. de Buffy. An Indian Gentoo merchant perceived a Mahometan ſoldier of his acquaintance going to kill one of theſe rep­tiles, which he had found ſleeping under his packet,

the Gentoo flew to beg its life, proteſting it would do no hurt if it was not firſt provoked ; paſſing at the ſame time his hand under its belly to carry it out of the camp, when suddenly it twiſted round, and bit his little finger ; upon which this unfortunate martyr of a fana­tic charity gave a ſhriek, took a few ſteps, and fell down inſensible. They flew to his aſſiſtance, applied the ſerpent-ſtone, fire, and ſcarifications, but they were all ineffectual, his blood was already coagulated. About an hour after, I ſaw the body as they were going to burn it, and I thought I perceived ſome indications of a complete diſſolution of the blood.

“ The s*erρens brulans,* or burning ſerpent, is nearly of the ſame form with the laſt mentioned ; its ſkin is not quite of ſo deep a brown, and is ſpeckled with dark green ſpots ; its poiſon is almoſt as dangerous, but it is leſs active, and its effects are very different : in ſome persons it is a devouring fire, which, as it circulates through the veins, preſently occaſions death ; the blood diſſolves into a lymphatic liquor, reſembling thin broth, without apparently having paſſed through the interme­diate ſtate of coagulation, and runs from eyes, noſe, and ears, and even through the pores. In other ſubjects, the poiſon items to have changed the very nature of the humours in diſſolving them ; the ſkin is chapped and becomes ſcaly, the hair falls off, the members are tume­fied, the patient feels all over his body the moſt racking pains, numbnefs, and is not long in periſhing. It is said, however, that people have been cured by remedies well and ſoon applied. Be that as it may, it ſeems to me that the poiſon of theſe different reptiles is in gene­ral more powerful the more they live in hot and dry places, where they feed upon infects that are full of saline, volatile, and acrimonious particles.”

We are ignorant of what ſpecie the *hemοrrhοis* was, which is deſcribed by Lucan as cauſing by its bite a flux of blood from every part of the body. But the bite of an American ſerpent named de *la crux* kills in the ſame manner.

The di*pſaſas* is at preſent likewiſe unknown. Lu­can informs us, that the perſon wounded by it was at­tacked by an unquenchable thirſt. This is finely paint, ed by him ; where A. Tuſcus, ſtandard-bearer of Cato, is deſcribed as bitten by that ſerpent :

*Non decus imperil, non maesti jura Catonis*

*Ardentem tenuere virum, quin ſpargere signa*

*Auderet, totiſque furens exquireret agris*

*Quas poscebat aquas sitiens in corde venenum.*

Pharſal.l.9,

His wild impatience, not his honour’d ſtate,

Nor ſorrowing Cato’s high command, reſtrain ;

Furious, diſhonour’d in the dull, he stings

His sacred eagle, and o’er all the fields

Rapid he burſts to ſeek the cooling ſtrearn,

To quench the thirſty poiſon in his breaſt.

And a few verſes aſter :

*Scrutatur venas penitus squalentis arenae*

*Nunc redit ad Syrtes, et fluctus accipit ore,*

*Aquoreaſque placet, ſed non sibi sufficit humor,*

*Nec sentit fatique genus, mortemque veneni,*

*Sed putat esſe sitim ; ſerroque aperire tumentes*

*Sustinuit venas, atque os implere cruore.*