From theſe noxious qualities in the ſerpent kind, it is no wonder that not only man, but beaſts and birds, carry on an unceasing war againſt them. The ichneu­mon of the Indians, and the peccary @@\* of America, deſtroy them in great numbers. Theſe animals have the art of ſeizing them near the head ; and it is ſaid that they can skin them with great dexterity. The vulture and the eagle alſo prey upon them in great abundance ; and often, ſouſing down from the clouds, drop upon a long ſerpent, which they snatch up ſtruggling and wri­thing in the air. Dogs alſo are bred up to oppoſe them. Father Feuillce tells us, that being in the woods of Martinico, he was attacked by a large ſerpent, which he could not eaſily avoid, when his dog immediately came to his relief, and ſeized the aſſailant with great courage. The ſerpent entwined him, and presſed him ſo violently, that the blood came out ol his mouth, and yet the dog never ceaſed till he had torn it to pieces. The dog was not ſenſible of his wounds during the ſight ; but ſoon after his head ſwelled prodigiouſly, and he lay on the ground as dead. But his maſter having found a banana tree hard by, he applied its juice mixed with treacle to the wounds, which recovered the dog, and quickly healed his sores.

The Pſylli of old were famous for charming and deſtroying ſerpents@@\*. Some moderns pretend to the ſame art. Caſaubon ſays that he knew a man who could at any time ſummon 100 ſerpents together, and draw them into the fire. Upon a certain occaſion, when one of them, bigger than the reft, would not be brought in, he only repeated his charm, and it came forward, like the reſt, to ſubmit to the flames. Philoſtratus deſcribes particularly how the Indians charm ſer­pents, “ They take a ſcarlet robe, embroidered with golden letters, and ſpread it before a ſerpent’s hole.— The golden letters have a fascinating power ; and by looking ſtedfaſtly, the ſerpent’s eyes are overcome and laid aſleep.” Theſe and many other feats have been of­ten practiſed upon theſe animals by artful men, who had firſt prepared the ſerpents for their exerciſe, and then exhibited them as adventitiouſly aſſembled at their call. In India there is nothing ſo common as dancing ſer­pents, which are carried about in a broad flat veſſel, ſomewhat reſembling a sieve. Theſe erect and put themſelves in motion at the word of command. When their keeper ſings a slow tune, they ſeem by their heads to keep time ; when he ſings a quicker meaſure, they ap­pear to move more brisk and lively. All animals have a certain degree of docility ; and we find that ſerpents themſelves can be brought to move and approach at the voice of their maſter. From this trick, ſucceſsfully practiſed before the ignorant, it is moſt probable has ariſen moſt of the boaſted pretenſions which ſome have made to charming of ſerpents ; an art to which the na­tive Americans pretend at this very day, but the exiſtence of which we are aſſured of by Mr Haſſelquiſt amongſt the native Egyptians.

Though the generality of mankind regard this for­midable race with horror, yet there have been ſome na­tions, and there are ſome at this day, that consider them with veneration and regard. The adoration paid by the ancient Egyptians to a ſerpent is well known : many of the nations at preſent along the weſtern coaſt of Africa retain the ſame unaccountable veneration. Up­

on the gold and slave coaſts, a ſtranger, upon entering the cottages of the natives, is often ſurpriſed to fee the roof ſwarming with ſerpents, that cling there without moleſting and unmoleſted by the natives. But his surpriſe will increate upon going farther ſouthward to the kingdom of Widah, when he finds that a ſerpent is the god of the country. This animal, which travellers deſcribe as a huge overgrown creature, has its habitation, its temple, and its prieſts. Theſe impreſs the vulgar with an opinion of its virtues ; and numbers are daily ſeen to offer not only their goods, their proviſions, and their prayers, at the ſhrine of their hideous deity, but alſo their wives and daughters. These the prieſts rea­dily accept of, and after ſome days of penance return them to their ſuppliants, much benefited by the ſerpent’s ſuppoſed embraces.

Serpent, a muſical inſtrument, ſerving as a baſs to the cornet, or small shawm*,* to ſuſtain a chorus of fingers in a large edifice. It has its name *ſerpent* from its figure, as consiſting of ſeveral folds or wreaths, which serve to reduce its length, wſhich would other- wise be six or ſeven feet.

It is uſually covered with leather, and conſiſts of three parts, a mouth-piece, a neck, and a tail. It has six holes, by means whereof it takes in the compaſs of two octaves.

Merſennus, who has particularly described this in­ſtrument, mentions ſome peculiar properties of it, e*. gr.* that the found of it is ſtrong enough to drown 20 robuſt voices, being animated merely by the breath of a boy, and yet the found of it may be attempered to the ſoftneſs of the ſweeteſt voice. Another peculiarity to this inſtrument is, that great as the distance between the third and fourth hole appears, yet whether the third hole be open or ſhut, the difference is but a tone.

Serpent, in mythology, was a very common ſymbol of the sun, and he is repreſented biting his tail, and with his body formed into a circle, in order to indicate the ordinary courſe of this luminary, and under this form it was an emblem of time and eternity. The ſer­pent was alſo the ſymbol of medicinc, and of the gods which presided over it, as of Apollo and Æsculapius : and this animal was the object of very ancient and gene­ral worſhip, under various appellations and characters. In moſt of the ancient rites we find ſome allusion to the ſerpent, under the ſeveral titles of Ob, Ops, Py­thon, &c. This idolatry is alluded to by Moſes, (Æev. **XX.** 27.) The woman at Endor who had a familiar ſpirit is called Oub, or Ob, and it is interpreted Pythonisſa. The place where ſhe resided, ſays the learned Mr Bryant, ſeems to have been named from the worſhip then inſtituted ; for Endor is compounded of Enador,and signifies s*ons Pythonis, "*the fountain of light, the oracle of the god Ador, which oracle was probably founded by the Canaanites, and had never been totally ſuppressed. His pillar was alſo called Abbadi*ir,* or A*badir,* compounded of *ab* and *adir,* and meaning the ſerpent deity Addir, the ſame as Adorus.

In the orgies of Bacchus, the perlons who partook of the ceremony uſed to carry ſerpents in them hands, and with horrid ſcreams call upon Eva ! Eva! Eva being, according to the writer just mentioned, the same as epha, or opha, which the Greeks rendered *ophis,* and by it denoted a ſerpent. Theſe ceremonies and

@@@[m]\* See PSYLLI.