at 263,@@l we do not find above fifty-seven of these endowed with injurious attributes,—that is, the proportion is not much more than one to five. This proportion, however, is not maintained throughout the various countries of the globe,— the venomous kinds seeming to be comparatively more nu­merous in open sterile countries. Of this, Africa and New Holland furnish examples,—the venomous species of the former continent being to the innocuous kinds as one to two or three, while of the ten species (or thereabouts) of ascertained New Holland species, not fewer than seven are venomous. In general, the number of individuals of each species is much more limited among the venomous kinds, as these live in an isolated manner, and rarely multiply so as to become abundant. Local circumstances sometimes favour an exception to this rule, as in the case of the *Trigo- noeephalus lanceοlarus* of Martinique and St Lucia, and that of the Dalmatian *Viperus ammodytes.* The sea-snakes, all of which are poisonous, are likewise of a gregarious nature.

Excepting the anomalous group called *Tortrix,* there does not seem to exist any genus of serpents which is spread over all countries capable of maintaining reptile life ; and this restriction seems to illustrate the intimate relation which subsists between the organization of these beings, and the countries they inhabit. For example, the Colubers pro­perly so called, which are destined to dwell in countries which are either well wooded, or marshy with abundant vegetation, have not yet been observed in New Holland, and are so rare in South Africa that only a single species has been found there, and that of a somewhat anomalous nature, in so far as its characters exhibit an approach to those of species which dwell by preference in sandy deserts.

A similar observation applies nearly to the genus *Corοnella,* composed of species which inhabit marshy plains, or such as are covered by brushwood. None of these occur in New Holland (which is noted for its frequent want of water), while the South African kinds differ from the typical spe­cies of the genus. The *tree-serpents* are characteristic of equatorial countries, inhabiting of course only those por­tions which fulfil the conditions of their existence, that is, are well wooded. The three genera which compose the family are found both in the Old and New World ; but it is noticeable that the species of the genus *Dipsas* of America do not attain to so great a size as the majority of those of India ; while the genus *Dryophis* in America forms a true geographical division of the group, in so far as the dental system and muzzle are less developed, and the pupil of the eye is orbicular. The fresh-water snakes, comprised in the genera *Tropidonotus* and *Homalopsis,* occur abundantly in countries rich in permanent lakes, and watered by con­tinuous rivers. They are thus well known in Asia, Ameri­ca, and even Europe, but are extremely rare in Africa, and unknown in New Holland. The genus *Homalopsis,* indeed, which contains the essentially aquatic species, does not oc­cur in Africa, but predominates in the New World, so rich and unrivalled in its mighty reservoirs of water.

The geographical distribution of the *Boas* exhibits some facts worthy of record. The whole are peculiar to warm countries. The genuine species are confined to South America ; their analogues in the ancient world being the *Pythons* of India, although in the latter country we also find several serpents very similar to Boas, but of very small size, and of which none exists in the western world, except a single representative in the island of Cuba. The genus *Acrοchordus* forms a limited group, entirely confined to the East Indies. Of the venomous serpents, it is chiefly the vipers, and perhaps a few rattle-snakes, which make their way into temperate or colder countries, the majority of the genera occurring in intertropical regions. Of the colubriform venomous serpents, the genus *Elaps* is the only one which occurs in both worlds; and it is not improbable that the American species will be found to constitute a geogra­phical group, distinguished by their peculiar coloration, and certain small distinctions even in form. The Indian species of the genus last named are longitudinally striped, instead of being ringed with red and black, while those of New Hol­land present some anomalous features. The genus *Bungarus* is proper to the East Indies, where also are found certain *Najas,* although the majority of these prefer a drier and more sandy soil,—a circumstance which explains their greater predominance in Africa and New Holland. The fact does not seem to admit of easy explanation, that *salt-water serpents* should be found almost exclusively in the Indian seas, from Malabar to the great Pacific Ocean. In regard to the venomous kinds properly so called, of the three ge­nera of which that division is composed, it may be observ­ed, that one, *Viperus,* is proper to the ancient world ; that another, *Crotalus,* is confined to the new ; while a third, *Trigonocephalus,* occurs in both. These last-named rep­tiles dwell in great forests, or in well-w∞ded countries, and for that reason are not observed either in Africa or New Holland, where they are replaced **by** vipers ; but it may be mentioned, that the viper of New Holland is an anomalous species, while such as inhabit Europe equally depart from the typical form, and tend towards that of *Trigonοcephalus.* In the genus just named two divisions may be established, one composed of species with the head clothed with scales, and which inhabit more particularly tropical countries; an­other formed of species with the head covered by scaly plates, and which extend into temperate regions.

The preceding are a few of the most general facts in the distribution of Ophidian reptiles. We shall now notice some of those peculiarities which distinguish particular con­tinents,—and, first, of Europe. We here find no species of the genera *calamaria, Heterodon,* or *Lycodοn,* no genuine tree-serpents, no species of *Homalopsis* or *Boa.* We never meet in Europe with any salt-water serpents, nor with any of the colubriform venomous kinds ; and the poisonous tribes in general are represented merely by a few vipers. That the entire order of Ophidian reptiles has its great centre of dominion in sultry regions, is made manifest by the fact,

@@@, We here follow the computation of M. Schlegel, who probably proceeds upon the idea that the actual species have been nominally multiplied by the misapplication (and duplication) of various names. The amount must have been considerably greater in M. Humboldt's opi­nion, as that illustrious writer incidentally states that equatorial America produces 115 serpents out of the 320 which form the Ophidian or­der. Daudin, even in his time, described about 313 supposed species, of which eighty were regarded as venomous and 233 as innocuous, which gives a greater proportion to the former than they are at present entitled to. Nearly 400 different kinds of serpents are believed to exist in the Paris Museum, although we know not with what degree of critical accuracy that enumeration has been made.

We do not ourselves possess the means of ascertaining the total number of reptiles now known to naturalists; but the following table exhibits the amount (as in 1834) in the National Museum of Paris, compared with the number described in the works of three principal writers on the class in question :—

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Lacépède, 1790. | Daudin, 1805. | Merτem, 1820. | French Museum, 1834. |
| Chelonians | 24 | 62 | 62 | 97 |
| Saurians | 56 | 86 | S3 | 168 |
| Ophidians | 172 | 315 | 348 | 391 |
| Batrachians | 40 | 91 | 87 | 190 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 292 | 556 | 580 | 846 |

We may conclude this note by observing, that the unfortunate Wagler, in his **Naturliches System der Amphibien, four** vols. Munich, 1830, with folio Atlas of plates, has described no fewer than 248 **genera** of the reptile race.