brownish black, and other hucs, and is subject to a great variety of aspect, so fur as colour is concerned. It is, how­ever, well characterized by the small smooth scales which cover both head and body, and of which there are sixty- seven rows. The head is heart-shaped, and the tail short. Abdominal plates 243, caudal fifty-eight. This species is na­tive to the intertropical countries of South America, and not only have its size and voracity been greatly exaggerated, but many traits have been applied to it which truly belong only to the Pythons of the ancient continent. Thus the very name of *Devin,* bestowed upon it by Lacépède, is bor­rowed from what Bosman relates of the worship accorded by the negroes to certain African reptiles. It is met with in Surinam and Brazil, in woody districts, being sometimes seen suspended from the branch of a tree, sometimes con­cealed in the hollows of rocks, or beneath an ancient trunk. It is feared by no one, is often killed with a short walking- stick, and is commonly known by the name of *Jiboya.* It feeds on small and middle-sized mammalia, such as mice, rats, agoutis, pacas, and capybaras, as well as on various reptiles. A hunter, however, assured the Prince of Neuwied, that his dog on one occasion would have fallen a victim to a Boa of this species, had he not contrived to shoot it during the combat. The true constrictor does not enter the water. The Brazilians take it by means of gins, and employ its skin for making boots and saddle-cloths. They also use its fat. All engraved representations of this species, having been made from ill-prepared museum specimcns, are worse than indifferent.@@1

The rat-eating Boa, *B. murina,* Linn. *(B. Anaconda,* Daud.@@2 *B. aguatica,* Neuw.@@3), is the largest Ophidian rep­tile of America, and probably the most gigantic of known species. It is distinguished in Brazil by the title of *Cucuriuba,* and passes a great portion of its time in the water, either swimming about in various directions, or floating lazily with the current. It dives with great dexterity, can remain for a length of time beneath the surface, and is said to prey on fish as well as quadrupeds. It is tenacious of life, and is killed by the natives either with bow or musket in the water, or with sticks when met with on shore, where its movements are somewhat sluggish. Both its skin and fat are used for various purposes, and its flesh is eaten by the Botocudes. M. Fermin measured one which had at­tained the length of twenty-three and a half feet ; and the Prince of Neuwied was assured by the natives that it is often much longer, although he himself never saw one above twenty feet. This species exhibits less varied markings than the preceding. The general hue of the upper parts is sooty brown, with two rows of orbicular blackish spots along the back. The under surface and sides are of an ochry yellow, the latter marked with a double row of ir­regular eye-shaped spots, which confound themselves with numerous squarer spots upon the belly. The nostrils are vertical, the eyes also directed upwards. The head is of

an elongated form, with a rounded muzzle. Abdominal plates 250, caudal sixty-six.

The other species of this genus are *B. cenchria, canina* (Plate CCCCXLIII. figs. 8-11), *hortulana,* from South America ; *B. Dussumieri,* from a small island near the Mau­ritius ; *B. carinata,* from the Moluccas and New Guinea ; *B. conica,* from Bengal ; and *B. melanura,* from the island of Cuba.

Genus Ρυτηον. Several intermaxillary teeth. Upper portion of the orbit formed by a particular bone incased among the three frontals, and named super-orbital by Cu­vier. Sub-caudal plates usually divided. Lips hollowed out in front. Plates of the head larger and more regular than in Boa. See Plate CCCCXLIII. figs. 1*b*, le, and 3, and Plate CCCCXLIV. fig. 5.

This genus was established by M. Daudin for the recep­tion of the great serpents of the ancient world. Brown, black, and yellow, are their prevailing colours. Certain of the species cqual (some say exceed) the Boas of America in size, for example the *Ular-sawa (Python bivitratus,* Khul,—*col.* *Javanicus,* Shaw). This species is of a yellowish tint, relieved by a pattern of broad alternate brown spots. The top of the head is margined by two rays of the ground colour. The flanks are variously adorned by black and white, and the under surface is marked by deep square spots. There are sixty-three ranges of smooth small scales, 270 abdominal and seventy caudal plates. This great rep­tile is spread, according to M. Schlegel, over a vast extent of territory, being known to occur from the western coast of Africa, over the whole of intertropical Asia, as far cast as China and the island of Java. It is said to attain the length of twenty-five feet, and individuals of twenty feet in length have been seen and described by trustworthy naturalists. A fine specimen lived for some time in Hol­land, and was observed to be slow in its movements, mild in its temper, and never inclined to bite even when pro­voked. It was kept in a large box enveloped in woollen cloths, where it lay in continued tranquillity, and suffered itself to be drawn out for frequent exhibition without ma­nifesting any signs of anger or impatience. We suspect that the senses of this, and of other large tropical snakes, are so far benumbed by the change of climate in Europe as to produce stupefaction rather than tameness. The specimen in question was presented with food every eight days, which, however, it often refused for several successive times. It was most easily excited to eat by the sight of a live rabbit, into the head of which it would fix its teeth, and then, pla­cing it within a fold of its body, deprived it almost instantly of life. After the commission of this murder, it was in no hurry to swallow its victim, but sometimes licked it for a while, occasionally taking two or three hours to effect the final deglutition. This is supposed to be the *Pedda-poda* of Dr Russel, called rock-snake by the Anglo-Indians.@@4

We do not happen to know to what extent this or any

adults, “ which have been *often found* to exceed *forty feet* in length” *(Cabinet Cyelopædia,* vol. cxvi. p. 143). Yet he does not state thia as a result of observation, or as connected with his own knowledge as well as belief A single specimen of such gigantic reptile would be the wonder of Europe, and would make a fortune for its owner. A Dutch friend of Mr Waterton’s killed a Boa (he does not say of what species) twenty-two feet long, with a pair of stag’s horns in its mouth. It had swallowed the stag, but could not swallow the horns (at which we are not much surprised), and so had to wait in patience with that uncomfortable mouthful till its stomach had digested the body, “ and then the horns would drop out.” It was in this expectant plight that the Dutchman found it, as he was going in his canoe up the river, and sent a ball through its head *(Wanderings in South America,* third edit. p. 209). The large serpent *bagged* by Mr Waterton, after “ a sharp fray in the den, the rotten sticks flying on all sides, and each party struggling for superiority,” measured rather more than fourteen feet in length. It was of the kind called *Coulacanara,* a rare species, and so much thicker in pro-

portion to its length than any other snake of the forest, that an individual of the extent just elated “ is as thick as a common Boa of twenty-four.” Its jaws are so extensile, that Mr Waterton, after skinning his specimen, could easily get his head into its mouth.

@@@■ See Scheuchzer, *Βiblia Sacra,* pl. 746, fig. 1 :—Lace'p. *Quad. Ouip,* ii. pl. 16, fig. 1 :—Daudin, *Reptiles,* v. pl. 92, fig. 1. There are various figures of our *B. oonstrictor* in Seba's *Thesaurus,* and from these Laurenti seems to have composed such species as *Constrictor formosissimus, Res serpentum, diviniloquus,* and several others.

*@@@’ Reptiles,* v. 161, pl. 63.

*@@@» Abbild.* livrais ii. pl. 6, and *Beitr.* p. 226.

@@@4 Numerous nominal species have arisen from the superficial observance of different varieties of this Python. See Russel’s *Serpents*, pl. 20, 23, 24, and 29 ; and Daudin's *Reptiles,* v. pl. 64, fig. 1, and pl. 59, fig. 4.