nearly befallen an artist employed by Professor Reinwardt to paint the portrait of a living Naja. It had in some way disengaged its bands, and seemed to have prepared itself to attack the unsuspecting painter the moment he entered his apartment. He there found it supported on its tail, its body raised, its neck dilated, its head advanced,—and then giving utterance to some hissing sounds, it threw a quantity of sa­liva upon the very man who was about to hand it down to posterity, but who fortunately effected an instantaneous re­treat before it came to closer quarters. We doubt not the painter loved the picturesque, although that was not the time to gaze with admiration on the fierce intruder :—

Not with intended wave,

Prone on the ground (as since), but on his rear,

Circular base of rising folds, that tower’d Fold above fold, a surging maze ! his head Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes.

Dr Russel informs us that he never knew the bite of a hooded snake prove mortal to a dog in much less than half an hour, although it kills chickens in less than half a minute. Now the rattle-snake has been known to kill a dog in less than two minutes. Yet the use of the lunar caustic, which in the hands of the Abbé Fontana proved so efficacious when applied as remedial to the bite of the viper, was found of little or no avail in India as a counteraction to the venom of the *cobra de capello.@@'* We shall conclude our notices of this species by observing, that the Ceylonese jugglers, according to Dr Davy, use it without extracting the fangs, the only means which they employ to avoid its vengeance being courage and agility. It is in fact held in veneration by the natives of that island, who carefully avoid it, offer it no injury, and put it out of doors unhurt when it happens to enter their dwellings.@@\* The root of *Ophiorhyza mungos* is believed in India to be a specific against the bite of the *cobra de capello.*

Another noted species is the *Naja haje (coluber haje,* Linn.), which plays the same part in the history and su­perstitions of the African tribes as the preceding does in those of the Asiatic nations. The ancient Egyptians named it *Ouro,* a term which signifies king, and which the Greeks adopted into their language in the word *Ouraios.* It is frequently represented in various Egyptian antiquities, whether as drawn in colours, sculptured on the covers of sarcophagi, or cast in bronze. One of the great creative spirits of the world, called Cneph, Cnouphis, or Ammon, in the cosmogony of Egypt, was represented in their symbo­lical writings under the form of a serpent winding itself around a globe, or placed in the centre of a disk.

The jugglers of modern Egypt, especially of Cairo, use this Naja in their pretended sorceries. These people affect to be descendants of the ancient Psylli, and boast of inhe­riting from their ancestors the power of subduing and com­manding the most poisonous reptiles. The principal feat which they execute consists in making the naja counterfeit death, or they change it into a rod. This they seem to ef­fect by pressing the neck of the creature between their fin­gers, so as to produce a kind of catalepsy, which renders it stiff and motionless. This is rather a singular fact when considered in connection with the scriptural narrative, where the rods of the magicians, when thrown down, are converted into serpents.@@3 According to M. Geoffroy, the species is still sufficiently common in Egypt, occurring both in fields and ditches. “ Les cultivateurs sont donc exposés à le rencontrer fréquemment ; mais quoiqu’ils n’ignorent pas le danger de sa morsure, sa présence ne les empêche nulle­

ment de vaquer à leur travaux ordinaires ; connaissant bien les habitudes du redoubtable reptile, ils savent qu’ils n’au­raient à craindre d’être attaqués par lui, que s’ils venaient à commetre l’imprudence de s’en approcher. En effet, tant qu’ils se tiennent à quelque distance, l’haje se contente de les suivre du regard, en élevant sa tête et en prenant l’at­titude dans laquelle les fig. 4 et 5 le represent.”@@4 The Afri­can Naja attains to about the same size as the Asiatic, and greatly resembles it in general aspect ; but its neck is less capable of inflation, and its muzzle more conical. It is usually of a yellowish-brown colour above, varied with nu­merous black and white spots ; the under surface whitish, although some individuals exhibit broad black spots or bands on the abdomen. The Cape Naja is regarded by M. Schlegel merely as a climatic variety of that now mentioned.

The Australian species *(Naja pοrphyrica)* was first de­scribed by Dr Shaw.@@, It belongs to the genus *Oplocepluιlus* of Baron Cuvier, and we place it here on the au­thority of M. Schlegel. According to M. Lesson, it is greatly dreaded at Port Jackson, and several convicts are said to have died of its bite in a quarter of an hour. It is common in the sandy brushw∞d of the shores of Botany Bay. Its movements are full of force and vigour, its agi­lity remarkable, and it defends itself when attacked with great hardihood.@@6 Another New Holland species is *Naja curta,* described by MM. Quoy anil Gaimard, and said to bear resemblance to a viper. It is probably the only Colu- briform venomous reptile which exhibits a somewhat verti­cally elongated pupil.

*Family II.—Sea-Serpents.*

Our present family is placed here, on the supposition that all the species which it contains are poisonous. Se­veral naturalists, proceeding on certain data given by Dr Russel, have maintained the contrary opinion ; but long- continued researches on the part of M. Schlegel have led to the conclusion that there is really no exception to the rule. Great confusion prevails in the synonymy of the spe­cies, chiefly owing to the absence of good figures and ac­curate comparative descriptions,—even Dr Russel’s plates, which are the most numerous, being insufficient to lead to a rigorous determination of the species. The specimens themselves are obtained with great difficulty, and are con­sequently rare in our collections.

We have pot sufficiently precise information on which to settle the geographical boundaries of the marine family of serpents. That species occur in the Persian and Arabian Gulfs is by no means improbable ; but the fact is inferred rather from some passages in ancient writers than from mo­dern observation ; and we know that the authors of anti­quity, at least in some instances, mistook certain eel-formed fishes for actual snakes. Schneider indeed@@7 (whose com­petence as a *scholar* no naturalist would dare to doubt) has quoted several classical writers to demonstrate a remote knowledge of sea-serpents ; but that knowledge seems too superficially and vaguely expressed to be altogether trust­ed, or even understood. Elian comes closer to the point when he says, that “ the seas of India produce hydras with flattened tails.”@@8

Modern naturalists are believed to be in error who assert their occurrence in the Atlantic Ocean, no proper proof having been yet adduced of any of these species inhabiting the “ American Ferry,” as we see that world of waters now named, since the steaming days of the British Queen and

*@@@, Edinburgh Cabinet Library,* vol. viii.

*@@@» Ceylon,* p. 83, *et seq.*

@@@3 "Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments; for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents ; but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.” ***(Exodus,*** vii. 11,12.)

***@@@4 Descrip. de l'Egypte.,*** Atlas, Reptiles, pi. 7.

*@@@5 Zoology of New Holland* pl. 10.

*@@@6Voyage de lu Coquille,* Zoologie, ii. p. 55.

@@@7 *Hist. Amphib*. i. p. 255.

@@@∙ ÆI. 1. 16, chap. 8.