ways prominent, sometimes prolonged into a small upturn­ed trunk.

All the species are natives of the New World. The pre­vailing colour is red, ringed or spotted by a deeper hue. Their manners are unknown, but it is presumed that they inhabit a dry and sandy soil. We shall here name only the harlequin snake of America (*Het. coccineus),* which in­habits Louisiana and the southern states.@@1 The ground colour is a bright yellow, tending more or less to brown up­on the back, which is adorned with above twenty broad round or oval spots, of a purplish-red colour, bordered with black. Its brilliant tints are effaced soon after death. “ This beau­tiful snake,” says M. Audubon, alluding, we believe, to our present species, “ is rather rare in the United States, where I have observed it only in the south. It glides through the grass with ease, and ascends to the tops of bushes, and among the branches of fallen trees, to bask in the sun. Children are fond of catching it on account of its beauty. It feeds principally on insects, such as flies, and small Co- leoptera."@@’ This seems the species described by Herrera in his History of the West Indies, as inhabiting Mexico and the Floridas, where it is known by the name of *Madres de Hormigas,* on account of its frequenting the society of ants.

Genus **LYCODON.** Form usually thin, sometimes ex­tremely slender. Anterior maxillary teeth longer than the others. Vertical and anterior frontal plates small and shortened, the occipitals rather long.

The species inhabit both the Old and New World. The prevailing tint is of an earthy hue, passing more or less in­to brownish or ochry-yellow, the majority of species being ornamented by a collar of a clearer colour. Several kinds are ringed with black, white, and red. The abdominal plates usually amount to 200, the caudal vary from fifty to a hundred. We know little of the habits of these reptiles, of which above a dozen species have been collected in dif­ferent parts of the intertropical world.

Genus Coluber. This genus, ns originally established by Linnæus, contained all the Ophidian reptiles with sub­divided caudal plates. The venomous kinds were after­wards removed, and the genus itself partitioned into seve­ral groups ; but even then the genus Coluber properly so called continued to contain a vast amount of species. MM. Boie and Schlegel restricted it still farther ; and although it is difficult to apply the distinctive notes of these writers, the genus is natural in itself, when we seek to recognise it rather by the general bearing and physiognomy of the species, than by means of isolated characters.

It contains all those innocuous serpents of considerable size, which hold, as it were, by the form an<l proportion of their particular parts, a central position among the other Ophidians. Their bodies, less contracted than those of the fresh-water kinds, are yet by no means so slender as those of the arboreal species. Their head is not so lengthened as that of the latter, but is less broad than that of the aqua­tic sorts. The tail, modified in accordance with the nature of the species, varies in its form, as these resemble or re­cede from the conterminous groups in their mode of life. It is thus that certain species of the genus Coluber arc closely connected with *Tropidonotus,* or even *Homalopsis,* while others are linked with *Herpetodryas, Psammophis, Cοrοnelia,* or *Xenodon.* The muzzle is usually broad, thick, rounded, rather short, the nostrils lateral, open, and oblong. The head is always laterally angular, from whence results the lateral position of the eyes, of which the pupil is orbicu­lar in form. The body varies in proportional thickness in the different species, but is usually compressed, and slightly

pentagonal. The abdomen is generally broad, convex, rarely angular, and is covered by numerous plates, more closely set together than in other serpents, and sometimes amounting to nearly 300. The tail is almost always cylin­drical and pointed, generally of medium length, rarely slen­der and elongated, occasionally short and conic, its inferior portion furnished with divided plates.

Almost all the countries of the earth, of which the nature of the soil and climate is not altogether opposed to the ex­istence of the Ophidian order, are inhabited by the genus Coluber. Only a single species, however, has been found in Southern Africa, and not one has yet occurred in New Hol­land. Their habits are what may be termed terrestrial, that is, they rarely enter water of their own accord, although se­veral climb among shrubs and bushes with some celerity in search of prey. Several kinds occur in Europe, and those from intertropical countries measure in some instances from seven to eight feet. They are rarely adorned with bril­liant colours, brown being the prevailing hue. Of some the markings are uniform, while others are spotted or lon­gitudinally rayed. Of the European species, one of the best known and most extensively distributed is *Col. Æsculapii,* which sometimes attains to the length of from four to five feet. The colour of the upper parts is olive-brown, beneath yellowish, or marbled with gray, with a paler collar. Abdominal plates 228, caudal seventy-nine.@@’ We have notes on the history of this species from MM. Host and Lenz. It is described ns being extremely active in its movements, climbing trees with facility, but avoiding contact with water. It is oviparous, and feeds on lizards, frogs, and small birds, but takes no nourishment in captivity. When attacked, it defends itself with great determination ; but when captured, becomes tame in a few days. In the museum of Vienna, several specimens of this Æsculapian snake are preserved alive ; and their manners are so gentle that chil­dren make playthings of them, and handle them for hours at pleasure.

The ancient Greeks adored the god of medicine in va­rious places under diverse forms, but frequently in the guise of a ser∣>ent, as an emblem of sagacity, and an animal en­dowed with so many sanatory qualities, that several Hel­lenic peoples regarded the creature itself as the very Deity. It was especially so with the inhabitants of Epidaurus (a flourishing city of Peloponnesus), who in a sacred grove, the favourite abode of serpents, erected a magnificent temple in honour of these by us abhorred reptiles. The Roman people, when terrified by a great pestilence, which ravaged the ca­pital (in their year 461), sent an embassy to Epidaurus in search of this imaginary god, whom they might have found in sufficient abundance near at hand. They entertained these slimy deities in the island formed by the Tiber, and where we may still see their figure sculptured in marble in the gardens of St Bartholomew.@@? Chandler tells us, in his Travels, that the environs of Epidaurus still abound in harm­less serpents.

The only other species we shall here notice is *coluber quatοr-radiatus,* remarkable as being the largest of the Ophidian reptiles of Europe. According to Metaxa (in his *Monograph* of the Serpents of the Environs of Rome), it sometimes attains the length of seven feet. It occurs in Italy, the south of France and Spain, Dalmatia, Hungary, &c. Its prevailing colour is an ochry-yellow passing into brown, and somewhat deeper on the under surface. Two lines of darker brown run along the flanks, and a blackish line passes from the eye to the corner of the mouth. This species, in spite of its great size and formidable aspect, is

@@@1 Catcsby's *Carolina,* pl. 60.

*@@@∙ Ornithological Biography,* vol. i. p. 278 ; and *Birds of America,* pl. 52.

@@@’ Jacquin, ***Collectan.*** iv. 356, pi. 26 (Fem.), 27 (Mas).

@@4 Metaxa, p. 37 ;—and Aldrovandus, ***Serp.*** pl. 240. The above is not the species called ***Col. Æiculapii*** by Limueus, who misapplied the title to one of the coral snakes of America,— ***Coronclli venustissima*** of modern authors.