

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE RATTLE SNAKE.

Of the Rattle Snake, which is bred both in North and South America, but in no part of the old world, the colour is yellowish brown above, marked with broad transverse bars of black. Both the jaws are furnished with small teeth, and the upper one has four large incurvated and pointed fangs. At the base of each is a round orifice, opening into a hollow that appears again near the end of the tooth in the form of a small channel; these teeth may be raised or compressed. When the animals are in the act of biting, they force the fatal juice out of a gland near the roots of the teeth. This is received into the round orifice of the teeth, conveyed through the tube into the channel, and from thence with unerring direction into the wound. The tail is furnished with a rattle, consisting of joints loosely connected; which annually increase in number till they amount to about forty. The young Snakes, or those of a year or two old have no rattle at all.

As the tail of these Snakes, which are the most dreaded of all Serpents, keeps rattling upon the slightest motion, passengers are thus providentially warned of their approach to them. In fine weather the notice is always given, but not always in rainy weather; this inspires the Indians with a dread of travelling among the woods in wet seasons. In addition to this circumstance, the odour of the Rattle Snake is so extremely foetid, that when it basks in the sun, or is irritated, it is often discovered by the scent before it is either seen or heard. Horses and cattle frequently discover it by scent, and escape at a distance; but when the Serpent happens to be leeward of their course, they sometimes encounter its venom. It must, however, be remarked, that the Snake is not the aggressor; it being perfectly inoffensive to mankind, except when provoked. In fact, it always tries to avoid the presence of man. Instances have even been known of its being tamed; and becoming exceedingly gentle and docile.

The usual motion of the Rattle Snake is with its head to the ground. When, however, it is alarmed, it coils its body into a circle, with its head erect, and its eyes flaming in a terrific manner. But it cannot pursue rapidly and has no power of springing on its enemy.

POMPEII.—Concluded.

The temple of the pantheon is a magnificent ruin, and must have been one of the choicest in Pompeii. Its walls are decorated with exquisite paintings in fresco, arabesques, mosaics, &c., and its court is one hundred and eighty feet long, and two hun-

dred and thirty broad, and contains an altar, around which are twelve pedestals for statues and the twelve principal deities of the ancients. Gutters of marble are placed at the base of the *triclinium*, to carry away the blood of the victims. A thousand coins of bronze, and forty or fifty of silver, were found near the sanctuary.

We passed on to the *Curia*, a semicircular building, for the discussion of matters of religion by the magistrates; a temple of *Romulus*; the remains of a temple of *Janus*; a splendid building called the *Chalcidicum*, constructed by the priestess *Eumachea* and her son, and dedicated as a temple of concord, and came at last, by a regular ascent, into a large and spacious square called the *Forum Civile*. This part of the city of Pompeii must have been extremely imposing, Porticoes, supported by noble columns, encompassed its vast area the pedestals of colossal statues, erected to distinguished citizens, are placed at the corners; at the northern extremity rose a stately temple of *Jupiter*, on the right was another temple to *Venus*; beyond, a large public edifice, the use of which is not known; across the narrow street which bounds it, stood the *Basilica*, an immense building which served as a court of justice and an exchange.

We passed out at the gate of the city, and stopped at a sentry-box, in which was found a skeleton in full armour—a soldier who had died at his post! From hence formerly the road descended directly to the sea, and for some distance was lined on either side with the magnificent tombs of the Pompeians. Among them was that of the vestal virgins, left unfinished when the city was destroyed; a very handsome tomb in which was found the skeleton of a woman, with a lamp in one hand and jewels in the other, (who had probably attempted to rob before her flight,) and a very handsome square monument, with a beautiful *relievo* or on. of the slabs, representing (as emblematic of death) a ship furling her sails on coming into port. Near one of the large family sepulchres stands a small semicircular room, intended for the funeral feast after a burial; and there were found the remains of three men around a table scattered with relics of a meal. They were overwhelmed ere their feast was concluded over the dead.

The principal Inn of Pompeii was just inside the gate. We went over the ruins of it. The skeleton of an ass was found chained to a ring in the stable and the tire of a wheel lay in the court yard. Chequers are painted on the side of the door as a sign.

Below the tombs stand the "suburban villa of *Diomed*," one of the most sumptuous edifices of Pompeii. Here was found

every thing that the age could furnish for the dwellings of a man of wealth. Statues, frescos, jewels, wine, household utensils of every description, skeletons of servants and dogs, and every kind of elegant furniture. The family was large, and in the first moment of terror they all retreated to a wine vault under the villas, where their skeletons (18 grown persons and 2 children) were found seventeen centuries after! There was really something startling in walking the deserted rooms of this beautiful villa—more than one feels elsewhere in Pompeii—for it is more like the elegance and taste of our own day; and with the brightness of the preserved walls, and the certainty with which the use of each room is ascertained, it seems as if the living inhabitant would step from some corner and welcome you. The figures on the walls are as fresh as if done yesterday. The baths look as if they might scarcely be dry from use. It seems incredible that the whole Christian age has elapsed since this was a human dwelling—occupied by its last family while our Saviour was walking the world.

It would be tedious to enumerate all the curious places to which the guide led us in this extraordinary city. On our return through the streets, among the objects of interest was the *house of Sallust the historian*. I did not think, when reading his beautiful Latin in school, that I should ever sit down in his parlor! Sallust was rich, and his house is uncommonly handsome. Here is his chamber, his inner court, his kitchen, his garden, his dining room, his guest chamber, all perfectly distinguishable by the symbolical frescos on the walls. In the court was a fountain of pretty construction, and opposite, in the rear, was a flower-garden containing arrangements for dining in open air in summer. The skeleton of a female, (supposed to be the wife of the historian) and three servants, known by their different ornaments, were found near the door of the street.

We passed a druggist's shop and a cookshop, and entered, treading on a beautiful mosaic floor, the "house of the dramatic poet" so named, from the character of the paintings with which it is ornamented throughout. The frescos found here are the finest ancient paintings in the world, and from some peculiarity in the rings upon the fingers of the female figures, they are supposed to be family portraits. With assistance like this, how easily the imagination re-peoples these deserted dwellings!

A heavy shower drove us to the shelter of the wine vaults of *Diomed*, as we were stepping into our carriage to return to Naples. We spent the time in exploring, and found some thirty or forty earthen jars; still half-