

purpose; the animal was therefore to be opposed singly by him who had the greatest strength, the best armour, and most undaunted courage; in such encounters many must have fallen till one more fortunate than the rest might rid the country of its destroyer; and such was the original occupation of heroes. But as we descend into more enlightened antiquity, we find these animals less formidable, as being attacked in a more successful manner. We are told, that while Regulus led his army along the banks of the river Bagrada, in Africa, an enormous serpent disputed his passage across it. We are assured by Pliny, who says, that he himself saw the skin, that it was a hundred and twenty feet long, and that it had destroyed many of the army. At last, however, the battering engines were brought out against it; and these assailing it at a distance, it was soon destroyed. Its spoils were carried to Rome, and the general was decreed an *ovation* for his success; a kind of honour which was given for an exploit that was not of sufficient importance to merit a *triumph*. At present, indeed, such ravages from serpents are scarcely seen in any part of the world; not but in Africa and America there