

raised or depressed at pleasure. Their eyes are small in proportion to the length of their bodies; they are of different colours, yet all have a malignant appearance. In some, the upper eye-lid is wanting, and the animal winks with the under one: others have a membranous skin, like that of birds, which preserves the sight: the substance of the eye is hard and horny, the crystalline humour occupying a great part. The holes for hearing are visible, but it is somewhat doubtful whether they possess the sense of smelling, as they do not appear to have any conduits for that purpose. The tongue in all these animals is long and forked. It is composed of two long, fleshy substances, which terminate in sharp points, and are very pliable. Some of the viper kind have tongues a fifth part the length of their bodies; they are continually darting them out, but they are entirely harmless, and only terrify those who are ignorant of the real situation of their poison.

The gullet is very wide for the size of the animal and capable of being greatly distended; at the bottom of this is the stomach, but which is by no means so capacious, and only receives a part of the prey, while the rest continues in the gullet.