

which grows harder as it grows older, until the animal changes, which it usually does twice a year. This cover then bursts near the head, and the serpent creeps from it, by an undulatory motion, in a new skin, much more vivid than the former. As the edges of the foremost scales lie over the ends of their following scales, so those edges, when the scales are erected, which the animal has a power of doing in a small degree, catch in the ground, like the nails in the wheel of a chariot, and so promote and facilitate the animal's progressive motion. The erecting of these scales is by means of a multitude of distinct muscles, with which each is supplied, and one end of which is tacked to the middle of each of the foregoing.

In the form and disposition of scales there is a great difference in the different kinds; some have them disposed with exact symmetry, while in others they are very irregularly placed; some have large scales on the belly, others smaller, and often answering in number to that of the ribs, while some are entirely without them. But when we come to compare serpents with each other, the first great distinction appears in their size; for the great *lybaya* of Surinam frequently grows to