

Some serpents bring forth their young alive as the viper; some bring forth eggs, which are hatched by the heat of their situation as the common black snake, and the majority of the serpent tribe. When a reader, ignorant of anatomy, is told, that some of those animals produce their young alive, and that some produce eggs only, he is apt to suppose a very great difference in the internal conformation, which makes such a variety in the manner of bringing forth. But this is not the case; these animals are internally alike, in whatever manner they produce their young; and the variety in their bringing forth, is rather a slight than a real discrimination. The only difference is, that the viper hatches her eggs, and bring them to maturity within her body; the snake is more premature in her productions, and sends her eggs into the light sometime before the young ones are capable of leaving the shell. Thus, if either be opened, the eggs will be found in the womb, covered with their membraneous shell, and adhering to each other, like large beads on a string. In the eggs of both, the young one will be found, though at different stages of maturity: those of the viper will crawl and bite the moment the shell that encloses