

encloses them is broken open; those of the snake are not yet arrived at their perfect form.

Father Labat took a serpent of the viper kind, that was nine feet long, and ordered it to be opened in his presence. He then saw the manner in which the eggs of these animals lie in the womb. In this creature there were six eggs, each of the size of a goose egg, but longer, more pointed, and covered with a membranous skin, by which also they were united to each other. Each of these eggs contained from thirteen to fifteen young ones, about six inches long, and as thick as a goose-quill. These little mischievous animals were no sooner let loose from the shell than they crept about, and put themselves into a threatening posture, coiling themselves up, and biting the stick with which he was destroying them. In this manner he killed seventy-four young ones; those that were contained in one of the eggs escaped from the place where the female was killed, by the bursting of the egg, and their getting among the bushes.

The most material distinction among serpents is that some are venomous and some inoffensive. Of the poison of these animals much has been said; the various calamities that it is capable