

whole frame being dissolved into a putrid mass of corruption.

It has hitherto remained a matter of astonishment that so small a quantity of matter should produce such sudden, powerful, and deadly effects, for the venom has not the smallest acrid taste, and from all experiments that have been made it appears only a slimy insipid fluid. Charas, who often tasted it, assures us of the fact, and asserts, that it may be taken inwardly without any sensible effects, or any prejudice to the constitution. But the famous experiments that were tried by Rhedi, and others, in the presence of the Great Duke of Tuscany and his court, put this beyond any doubt whatsoever. By these it appeared, that the serpent having once bitten, exhausted for that time the greatest part of its poison; and though the wound caused by its biting a second time was attended with some malignant symptoms, yet they were much milder than before. It appeared also that the serpent biting upon a sponge, or a piece of soft bread, and then biting a dog immediately after, did not inflict a wound more dangerous than the prick of a needle. It appeared that the venom being collected, and a needle dipped in it, the wound made by that produced almost as painful effects