

of their nervous system: take out their brain or their heart, and cut off their head, yet they can still move, and the heart will even beat many hours after extraction; it is also stated that they can live without food for months, and even years.*

But though gifted by their Creator with such a tenacity of *life*, yet is that life often raised a very few degrees above death. Many of them select for their retreats damp and gloomy caverns and vaults, shut out from the access of the light and air. In allusion to this circumstance, Babylon, the imperial city, she, who in ancient times subjected the eastern world to her domination, was forewarned that she should *become* heaps, *and a dwelling-place for dragons*.†

Whether the many instances that have been recorded in different countries, of *toads* found incarcerated alive in blocks of stone or marble, or in trunks of trees, are all to be accounted for by supposing a want of accurate observation of the concomitant circumstances in those that witnessed their discovery, I will not take upon me to say; but they are so numerous, as to leave some doubt upon the mind whether some of these creatures may not have been accidentally interred alive, as it were, when in a torpid state, and continued so, till, their grave being opened, and the air admitted to their lungs again, their vital functions have been resumed, to the astonishment of those who witnessed the seeming miracle. Though so given to withdraw themselves into dark and dismal retreats, yet many of them are fond also of basking in the sun-beam, particularly the serpents and the lizards.

Zoologists seem not even yet fully to have made up their minds with regard to the classification of *Reptiles*. Linné placed them in the same Class ‡ with the *Cartilaginous Fishes*, of which they form his first and second *Orders*; but

* Cuv. Règn. An. ii. 1. 8. Lacep. Quad. Ovipar. i. 20.

† Jer. li. 37.

‡ Amphibia.