

through fire extinguishes it:* this is repeated by Pliny, who adds, that it extinguishes it like ice. It never appears, he further observes, except in showery weather, and likewise that it emits a milky saliva, which is depilatory.† Salamanders, says Bosc, emit from their skin a lubricating white fluid when they are annoyed, and if they are put into the fire, it sometimes happens that this fluid extinguishes it sufficiently to permit their escape; and again—when one touches the terrestrial salamander, it causes to transude from its skin a white fluid, which it secretes more copiously than its congeners. This kind of milk is extremely acrid, and produces a very painful sensation upon the tongue. According to Gesner, it is an excellent depilatory. It is sometimes spirted out to the distance of several inches, as Latreille has observed, and diffuses a particularly nauseous scent; it poisons small animals, but does not appear to produce serious effects upon large ones.‡

I have introduced these ancient and modern statements to show how little they differ, and in confirmation of the truth of them I have a remarkable occurrence to relate, which I give upon the authority of three ladies who witnessed the fact, and upon whose accuracy I can rely. They were residing at Newbury, where their cellars were frequented by frogs, and a kind of newt, or salamander, of a dull black colour. Several of the frogs were caught one day, and put into a pail; and while the ladies were looking at them they were surprised by observing the frogs one after another turn themselves on their backs, and lie with their legs extended quite stiff and dead. Upon examining the pail they found one of these efts, as they called them, running round very quickly amongst the frogs, each of

* Hist. An. lib. v. chap. 19.

† Hist. Nat. l. x. 67.

‡ N. D. D'H. N. xxx. 58, 59.