A HISTORY OF BRITISH REPTILES

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649234523

A history of British reptiles by Thomas Bell

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HISTORY

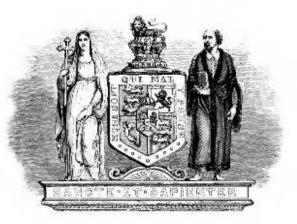
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BRITISH REPTILES.

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY 50 WOOD-ENGRAVINGS.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON: JOHN VAN VOORST, 1, PATERNOSTER ROW. M.DCCC.XLIX.

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WILLIAM YARRELL, ESQ. V.P.L.S. V.P.Z.S.

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THIS LITTLE VOLUME,

FORMING A HUMBLE PORTION OF THAT SERIES OF WORKS.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

BRITISH ZOOLOGY,

WHICH DERIVES ITS PRINCIPAL

ATTRACTION AND VALUE

FROM HIS EXTENSIVE INFORMATION

AND HAPPY METHOD OF COMMUNICATING IT,

15 INSCRIBED

AS A CORDIAL BUT INADEQUATE OFFEBING

OF REGARD AND RESPECT,

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



INTRODUCTION.

The Reptilia constitute a class of vertebrated animals of which the structural characters are as follow :— They have cold blood, — that is to say, their power of producing animal heat is so limited as searcely to be appreciable, and not sufficient, therefore, to keep up any standard temperature of the body, nor to prevent it from following all the thermal variations of the atmosphere or water by which they are surrounded.

The integument is covered with hard and dry cuticle in various modifications of form, in some constituting broad plates, in others imbricated scales. The heart is in all cases trilocular,-that is to say, it is composed of two auricles and a single ventricle; the respiration is exclusively pulmonary throughout life, and their reproduction is oviparous. The Amphibia, or Batrachia, which are included in the Reptilia by Cuvier and many other naturalists, differ from them, however, in various essential and important characters. The heart particularly is bilocular: the integument is naked, and the respiration is carried on by means of branchise during the earlier period of life, changing - in some totally, and in others partially - to the pulmonary character in the adult condition.