

**THE JABIRU OF SENEGAL.**

The Jardin des Plantes, at Paris, has been enriched recently by the acquisition of various animals. One of the most interesting of these, without doubt, is the jabiru of Senegal, which naturalists, in their not very harmonious language, call the *Mycteria senegalensis*. This bird belongs to a genus allied to the one containing the marabou, which is so well known to those who frequent zoological gardens, and to the same family as our storks. It is impossible in examining it not to make the reflection that animals possess a physiognomy in keeping with their habits. The marabou, a bird of revolting voraciousness, which shares with the vulture the duty of disposing of carcasses and various kinds of filth lying around, is fully as repulsive in its aspect as the jabiru is attractive. It is, in fact, because the latter eats living prey and has the bold and free step of the hunter. Living in the vicinity of ponds and rivers, it hunts and fishes by turns. It often flies, which is something that the marabou rarely does, as the latter is kept on the ground by its duty as a scavenger. The jabiru lives in pairs, and the male and female of each couple never leave one another. Its area of distribution is quite an extended one. From the banks of the White Nile, as far as Senegal having for northern limit the fourteenth degree of latitude, it lives in the whole center and southwest of Africa, although nowhere abundant.

It is larger than our stork, and its back, the upper part of its wings, its head, neck, and tail are of a brilliant black, while the lower parts of its body are of a beautiful white. Its red and black bill is provided with two pendent wattles that have been likened to a saddle, and that have sometimes given the bird the name of the saddled stork. In captivity it is a pleasant companion. It respects its neighbors, but wishes to be respected by them. Like the stork, it has great regard for its dignity and does not allow any one to injure it. According to Bennett, who has made observations on Australian jabirus in captivity, the habits of which are much like those of the Senegal bird, and according to Dr. Bodinus, who has had several of the latter in his possession, they are easy to rear and do not suffer from changes in temperature. It would perhaps be possible, then, to acclimate them in our country, where they might, while proving an ornament to our marshes, render service by destroying frogs, field mice, and other vermin. They would swallow here and there a few fish; but, since Europe will soon witness the death of the last heron, it would prove a certain compensation for the friends of animals if they could replace that by a bird of more sociable habits, and which by that very fact would be more effectually protected. The new boarder at the Jardin des Plantes, to judge from the pale tints of its plumage, is still a young bird. It does not appear to us to enjoy very vigorous health. We have seen it often, and it was always seated and making a plaintive clucking, and partially opening with a sickly air its long bill, whose upper mandible had been mended with a piece of tin.—*La Nature*.

**THE DART SNAKE, OR MILK SNAKE.**

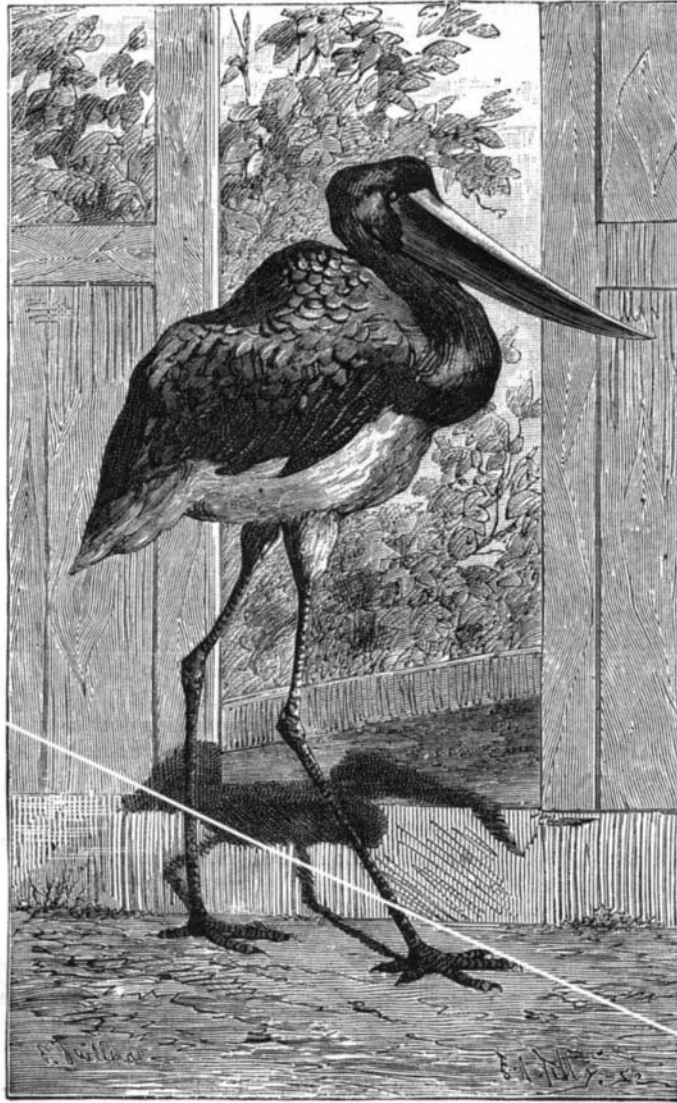
This truly pretty serpent is known by several names in different parts of the country. Thus, in the Eastern States it is generally called the "checkered adder," in the Middle States "milk snake," and in Maryland and Virginia "house snake." The name adder came originally from the Anglo-Saxon word *aetter* (poison), and is now generally applied to a venomous species, which our serpent is not. It is called "milk snake," I have been informed, for the reason that it frequents milk houses and drinks milk from the pans; yet I have been told by farmers living in districts, where I knew these serpents to be numerous, that they were never found in their milk houses. It has occasionally been seen in cellars and outhouses, but so also have been garter snakes, black, brown, and other snakes. Consequently all of its common names are calculated to mislead in regard to its habits. I have taken the liberty to call it dart snake, which I merely take from its generic name, *Ophibolus*. Whether this name was given on account of the arrow, javelin, or spear-head mark on its head, or from its activity or flashy appearance, I am not certain, but in either case the name is quite applicable.

As regular steps of variation have been observed, from the red snake, *Ophibolus doliatius* (Linn.), to our dart snake, its scientific name should be *Ophibolus doliatius* (Linn.) *triangulus* (Boie), Cope. Dr. De Kay, in the "New York Fauna," named it *Coluber eximius*, not knowing that it had previously been described by Boie as *Coluber triangulum*.

The dart snake is found from Virginia to Canada, and west to Wisconsin. It measures in length from 25 inches to 3 feet 5 inches. The ground color of the body is pale gray or ash, with from forty to fifty transversely elliptical dark-

brown dorsal blotches, bordered with black, and one or two rows of small spots along the sides; beneath, white, checkered with dark-brown or black spots.

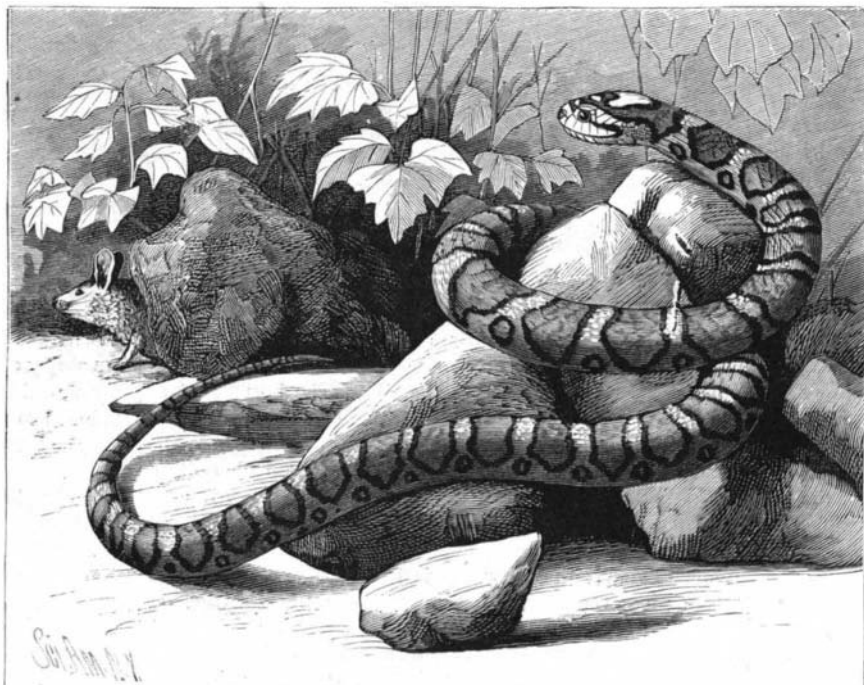
Unlike our common garter and water snakes, whose young are at the moment of oviposition produced alive, this species is oviparous. The eggs are deposited under a pile of chips or dead leaves, where they are left to hatch. The young, when they first quit the egg, are about four inches in length, and are far prettier than the parent. The spots, which are



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brown in the adult, are bright red in the baby snakes, and they then greatly resemble the typical red snake, *O. doliatius*.

There is perhaps no snake more useful upon farms than this, for it is a great destroyer of field and meadow mice. I heard of one that was killed which had no less than four field mice in its stomach. I saw a farmer plow up in a short space of time two of these snakes, and in both cases he stopped his horses, pursued, and killed the snakes, and yet by so doing he was throwing away several bushels of grain.



**DART OR MILK SNAKE.**—(*Ophibolus doliatius* (Linn.) *triangulus* (Boie).)

I have heard of one instance where one was killed in the act of devouring a young robin; but as the robin is a noted cherry and berry thief, and has a great fondness for the useful earthworm—nature's worker of the soil—he should be classed with the injurious rather than the beneficial birds, and so the snake may be excused this change of its bill of fare. I can accuse this snake of one bad act: A gentleman in New York State found one swallowing a garter snake. The gentleman wrote me that there was no doubt as to what

species it was, for it agreed perfectly with a specimen in the museum labeled *Coluber eximius*. C. FEW SEISS.

**The Progress of Cremation.**

The president of the New York Cremation Society states that organized cremation societies exist in Italy, at Milan, Udine, Cremona, Como, Rome, Bologna, Pavia, Codogno, Padua, Genoa, Turin, Modena, Florence, Venice, Ancona, Novara, Brescia, Leghorn, Pisa, Placentia, and Parma. The subscribing members of these societies number upward of 5,000. At Lodi optional cremation is made an official sanitary institution by the municipal authorities, and so has outgrown all need of an organized society. There are also corresponding commissions to propagate the principles of cremation at Asti, Mantua, Vicenza, Reggio, and Carpi—in all, twenty-two societies and five propagating commissions.

There are established and in practical operation crematories at Milan (two), Lodi, Cremona, and Varese. There is in process of building a crematory at Rome; and it is reported that crematories are about to be built at Turin, Como, Brescia, and Padua. The actual number of crematories of human bodies at points named have been, down to the end of June, 1882: At Milan, 196; at Lodi, 20; at Cremona, 3—making a total in Italy of 219. At Gotha there have been 69 cases. In this country there have been 20, of which 14 were in the Le Moyne furnace.

The inventors and patentees of crematory apparatus are Gorini, Brunetti, Polli, Clericetti, Terruzzi, Betti, and Venini, of Italy, and Siemens, of Berlin, Dresden, and Gotha.

Gorini furnaces have been set up at Lodi, Milan, Varese, Cremona, Rome, and London, and they are preferred because adapted to any kind of light and inexpensive fuel. Siemens' method, however, has the preference of all scientific experts, as being most rapid and perfect in its work, though a trifle greater in cost than the Gorini method.

The New York Society are confident that a crematory will soon be erected near this city.

**Improvement in the Gait of Trotting Horses.**

The improvement in the quality of gait of the trotting horse within the last few years is one of the marvels in trotting. Only a very few years ago the jumping-jack kind of trotter was common in the very best localities. Indeed, the skip-jack gait was cultivated, and thought to be indispensable to fast speed in harness. The large majority of trainers argued that the horse must learn to break and catch before he could be relied upon in a race. For, said they, if he is not a good catcher, a break would put him behind the flag. Therefore, the horse must be spoiled before he was good for anything for a harness turf horse. A break rested him, they said. "Give him his head, let him jump a few rods, then set him down, and he can fairly fly." Such were the erroneous teachings of former years.

To-day the gait of the trotter is as smooth and regular as the play of a piston-rod; as rhythmical as the most harmonious symphonies of musical composition. Why is it so? Because fashion dictated. Mr. Bonner bought only such, and gentlemen of wealth everywhere followed his example. As soon as it became known that pure trotting gait was the saleable thing trotters began to make rapid improvement in the quality of gait not only, but in quantity as well. The modern trotter is, therefore, a model trotter. This was manifestly true of the horses that participated at Chicago this year, and are now engaged in the various circuits over the country. The change is not due to any particular improvement in the trotting families themselves so much as to the new methods in use for their education. There are few horses on the turf nowadays that pull a ton by the bit as was customary at one time. To trot fast, the horse should not be hampered by any more harness than is necessary for his complete safety. Indeed, we look for the horse to trot best with no more harness than bridle, reins, back-strap, saddle, and girth at an early day.—*Dunton's Spirit of the Turf*.

**William Stanley Jevons.**

William Stanley Jevons, best known by his masterly work on "The Principles of Science," was drowned while bathing at Bexhill, near Hastings, England, August

15. At the time of his death he was Professor of Political Economy in University College, London.

**The Largest Coastwise Cargo.**

The cargo taken out by the steamer Chalmette, for New Orleans, August 12, is said to be the largest coastwise cargo ever taken from this port. It comprised 400 car loads of miscellaneous freight for New Orleans and Texas. The Chalmette has a carrying capacity of 9,000 bales of cotton.