

# ANGUIS SCYTALÆ.



## CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Squamæ abdominales et squamæ subcaudales.

*Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 390.*

## CHARACTER SPECIFICUS.

Anguis squamis abdominalis 240, caudalibus 13.

*Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 392.*

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Non solum pulcherrimis dives coloribus superbit hic serpens, sed et omni noxio prorsus caret. Plurimus est in America Australi, sylvas incolens, variaque insecta devorans, scolopendras præcipue, quibus maxime delectari dicitur, ibi non solum numerosissimis sed et maximis. Colore est interdum albo nigroque, interdum subroseo nigroque: color tamen illi elegantissimus est aurantio-ruber, ventrem flavescens, totum corpus fasciis aterrimis pulcherrime variatus. Mira est illa et peculiaris generi exuvias abjiciendi facultas; hoc peracto novus ingreditur serpens forma læte vivida et coloribus splendidissimis. Hinc tamen fit ut non leviter errent Physici, qui ea de causa species minus accurate distinguere possunt. Notabilis hujus rei causam ita scite exponit celeberrimus Linnæus.

‘Hos nuda in terra rejectos, artuum ministerio expertes, omnium injuriæ expositos, armavit natura con-

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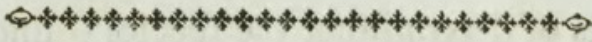
‘servatrix

‘fervatrix suis armis, horrentibus execrabili veneno,  
‘pessimorum pessimo, in diversis diverso. Ne vero hi  
‘spoliati miserieque armis quæ ipsis superessent nimium  
‘fævirent, decimam quamque tantum speciem armavit  
‘imperans, sed versipelles eos voluit, ut dubii omnes  
‘metuerentur ab omnibus.’





## THE PAINTED SNAKE.



### *GENERIC CHARACTER,*

*Body* covered with uniform scales, or those on the belly and beneath the tail, not differing in shape from the rest.

### *SPECIFIC CHARACTER.*

SNAKE with about 240 scales along the belly, and 13 beneath the tail. General colour black and orange; sometimes black and white, &c.

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The Serpent figured on this plate, besides being distinguished by the beauty of its colours, is perfectly harmless. It is common in South America, where it resides in woods, and preys upon various insects, &c. It is said to be particularly fond of Scolopendræ, or centipedes, which in those regions are uncommonly numerous and large. It is sometimes found entirely black and white, and sometimes pale rose-colour and black: but the most elegant state in which it appears is that of a bright orange-red; much paler or yellowish white on the belly, and beautifully fasciated all over with bars of the deepest black. One of the most singular properties of

of the serpent tribe, is that of casting their skins at certain periods, and appearing in a state of superior beauty in point of colour than before. This is one of the principal causes of that difficulty which obtains amongst Naturalists of determining the species; since one and the same animal may vary extremely in colour at different seasons, and therefore be mistaken for a different species. Linnæus gives a very good and probable reason for this, *viz.* 'That since the Author of Nature has armed many of the serpent tribe with a dreadful poison, He has ordained that all should cast their skins, in order to inspire a necessary universal caution and suspicion of the whole tribe.'

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The serpent figured on this plate, besides being distinguished by the beauty of its colour, is particularly remarkable. It is common in South America, where it resides in woods, and preys upon various insects, &c. It is said to be particularly fond of Scolopendras, or centipedes, which in those regions are uncommonly numerous and large. It is sometimes found entirely black; and white, and sometimes pale rose-colour and black; but the most elegant hue in which it appears is that of a bright orange-red; much paler or yellowish white on the belly, and beautifully variegated all over with bars of the deepest black. One of the most singular properties



Shaw, George. 1789. "The Painted Snake, *Anguis scytale* [Pl. 5]." *The Naturalist's Miscellany* 1(II), <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.310659>.

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