Coluber Alleghaniensis.
II.—Colubers with Carinated Scales.

COLUBER ALLEGHANIENSIS.—Holbrook.

Plate XIX.

Characters. Above, shining black; beneath, white on the throat, becoming clouded with brown on the anterior part of the abdomen, and entirely slate-colour towards and beneath the tail. Head elongated, rather large, distinct from the neck; body very long; scales on the back carinated, on the flanks smooth; tail rather short. Pl. 235–40. Sc. 78–84.

Description. The head of this serpent is elongated and large; and the mouth is also large. The vertical plate is pentagonal, short and broad; the superior orbital plates are large; the frontal large, irregularly pentagonal, broadest internally, and extending externally between the anterior orbital and posterior nasal to the loral plate, which is of trapezoid form, and small. The anterior frontal are small and rhomboidal in shape; the nasal are also large and somewhat trapezoidal, the one lunate before and the other behind for the nostrils; the rostral above is triangular, rounded in front and broad; the temporal are variable, sometimes consisting of two or three narrow plates, or their place is chiefly occupied by the last labial plates, very much enlarged; the posterior orbital are two in number; the anterior orbital is single and very large.

The nostrils are lateral, a little removed from the snout, and open outwards and backwards. The eyes are rather large, the pupil black, the iris brown.
The neck is small; the body much elongated, sub-caudal, and tapering at each extremity. The scales are oblong-oval and bipunctate at the apex; those on the back have a distinct carina; the four or five inferior rows on each side are smooth; on the tail they are broader and hexagonal in form. The tail is rather short and tapering.

Colour. The head is black above; the marginal plates of both upper and under lip are silver-white, edged with black; the throat also is silver-white. The body above is intense black, glistening or polished; but in a certain light a mixture of brown can be perceived on close inspection, without however any definable pattern; many of the scales have marginal dashes of white, which become visible when the skin is extended; towards the tail, however, the scales are entirely black. Beneath, the anterior part of the abdomen is white, clouded with brown, and the posterior part and tail entirely slate-colour.

Dimensions. Length of the head, to the commencement of the small scales, 15 lines; body, 4 feet 5 inches; tail, 9 inches: total length, 5 feet 3 inches. Circumference of the body in the thickest part, 4 inches. The specimen figured had 235 abdominal plates and 78 pairs of sub-caudal scales; a second, 240 plates and 84 scales.

Geographical Distribution. This serpent was first observed on the summit of the Blue Ridge, in Virginia, by Mr. George Robbins, of Philadelphia. Dr. Wilckens, of New York, has also favoured me with a specimen from the Highlands of the Hudson; and I have received many from the mountains of Carolina, so that it is probable its range extends throughout the Alleghanies.

Habits. The animal in confinement seemed of an exceedingly mild and gentle disposition; forming in this respect quite a contrast with its fellow prisoners, two individuals of the common Black Snake (Coluber constrictor), who maintained at all times their original wildness. It lived several months, and is now deposited in the Museum of the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia.
General Remarks. The Coluber Alleghaniensis is readily distinguished from the Black Snake by its carinated scales; still the two species bear a general resemblance, and might readily be confounded without proper examination.

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