Coronella Sayi.
CORONELLA SAYI.—Schlegel.

Plate XXII.

Characters. Head small, oval, rather rounded at the snout; body elongated, robust; above bluish-black, tinged with violet; each plate and scale marked with a milk-white spot. Pl. 205. Sc. 53.

Synonyms. Coluber Sayi, De Kay, manuscript.

Description. The head is small, oval, short, with the snout rather rounded. The vertical plate is triangular, with the basis broad and directed forwards, and the apex pointed and turned backwards; the superior orbital are oblong, pentagonal, broader behind, of the same length as the vertical, and slightly project over the eyes. The frontal plates are large, pentagonal and broadest internally; the anterior frontal are also large, but smaller than the posterior, quadrilateral, with their posterior and inferior angles prolonged. The rostral plate is hexagonal, rounded above, concave and slightly projecting below; the nasal plates are two on each side, nearly quadrilateral; the anterior hollowed behind and the posterior concave before to complete the nostrils; the loral plate is single and rhomboidal in form. There is a single anterior orbital plate, quadrilateral and elongated, most extensive vertically, and two very small posterior quadrilateral orbital; the occipital plates are large, broad, elongated and pentagonal. The upper jaw is covered with seven large, quadrilateral labial plates on each side, of which the fifth and sixth are largest, and the third and fourth make the inferior wall of the orbit of the eye.
The nostrils are lateral and near the snout. The eyes are prominent, the pupil dark, the iris grey. The neck is but slightly contracted.

The body is cylindrical, and covered with smooth sub-hexagonal scales above, as well as on the neck, where they are much smaller. The tail is short, thick at its root, but soon becomes smaller, and terminates in a horny point; the scales of the tail are large, but shorter in proportion than those of the back.

**Colour.** The head is bluish-black above; each plate with one or more yellowish-white oblong spots; the superior labial plates are yellowish or milky-white, each with a black border at either end, where two adjoining plates meet, which gives a banded appearance to the upper jaw. Every scale of the neck, body and tail is marked with a milky-white oblong spot, most commonly in the centre, but sometimes near the border, so that those of neighbouring scales come nearly in contact, or three or four appear in clusters together; these spots are largest low down on the flanks. The plates of the throat and abdomen are milk-white, each with a black spot, either a square or parallelogram; sometimes these spots are placed in the centre of the plate, and at others near their lateral extremities. In the posterior half of the body the black prevails; the last plate is however entirely white.

**Dimensions.** Length of head, 1 inch 3 lines; greatest breadth, 1 inch; length of body, 40 inches; length of tail beyond vent, 6 inches 2 lines: total length, 3 feet 11 inches 5 lines.

In the specimen here described there are 205 abdominal plates, and 53 sub-caudal scales, with a small horn at the tip of the tail.

**Habits.** I am ignorant of the habits of this serpent, never having seen but one specimen alive.

**Geographical Distribution.** The Coronella Sayi seems to be widely extended
in the valley of the Mississippi; for I have received it from Louisiana, high up Red river, from Missouri, from Arkansas, and also many specimens from Alabama; which, for the present, I must put down as its northern limit.

**General Remarks.** Dr. De Kay was the first herpetologist who noticed it as a distinct species, and communicated his observations to Say and other naturalists, who regarded it only as a variety of the Coronella getula, to which it certainly bears a striking general resemblance; yet on minute examination there will be found sufficient difference to constitute them distinct species.

The head of this animal is rather smaller, with the snout more prolonged than in the Coronella getula; the colours are differently disposed; the body is shorter and the tail longer in proportion; and their geographical distribution is widely different; the Coronella getula being found seven or eight hundred miles farther north in the Atlantic states than the Coronella getula; whereas, if they were but varieties, we might expect to find both animals in the same localities.

Schlegel was the first naturalist who published a description of this beautiful animal, in his excellent work entitled “Essai sur la Physionomie des Serpens.”

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