

natural consequence; in this fatal case there can be no doubt that the dog Shot was the first to discover and attack the snake, and Merry, upon hearing him bark, joined in the fight. It is quite unnatural for any of the serpent tribe to attack, except for the purpose of devouring their natural prey. As a general rule, the food of snakes consists of rats, mice, frogs, or toads, beetles, and other insects; the pythons and larger serpents feed upon such animals as hares, birds, and the young of either antelopes, deer, pigs, &c. Although a snake if trodden upon might by a spasmodic impulse inflict a bite, it would nine times out of ten endeavour to escape. The idea of any snake wilfully and maliciously premeditating an attack upon a man is quite out of the question, unless it has been either teased or excited by a dog when hunting. The same principle will hold good in the case of animals. No snake that feeds only upon rats, mice, and such small animals would seek to attack a dog, or any creature that was not its natural prey, and the actual danger from such reptiles is quite insignificant. The stories that are circulated of accidents are mostly exaggerated, or are perpetuated by constant repetition. I have been in snake countries such as Ceylon and Africa during many years, the greater portion of which has been passed in practical explorations, and I can safely say that I never thought of snakes until they met my eye, and no person that I ever knew was killed by a poisonous bite. In Cyprus there are several varieties. I have only seen three, a black species which is harmless, a mottled variety also non-poisonous, and a grey snake that is supposed to be deadly; there may be more, but I have never met with them. The stony nature of the country, and the bush-covered surface