

the arid regions of southern Mexico and northern Central America. The species are pleurodont; the teeth of the lower jaw are stout, slightly recurved and each is provided with a venom-conducting groove. In Borneo is a lizard technically known as *Lanthanotus borneensis*; its teeth have been alleged to be grooved, like *Heloderma*. Not much is known about this creature. Notwithstanding an apparent relationship to *Heloderma*, it would be unjust to describe the species as in any way venomous.

*The Tail.* For purposes of defense, the tail is an invaluable organ. With it, the larger lizards deal lashing, whip-like blows. Many lizards have a tail of extraordinary length—four or five times as long as the combined length of the head and body; a number possess a diminutive, stumpy appendage. With the majority of lacertilians the tail is readily discarded, and it is soon reproduced. Let us take one of the extremes of caudal development as an illustration, noting how the brittle appendage may save its owner's life in time of danger. Suppose a limbless lizard—a Glass "Snake"—is pursued by an active, reptile-eating serpent. The former's stiff, undulatory movements are hopelessly slow in comparison with the sinuous glide of the pursuer. In a moment the snake has seized its prey. There is a quick twist and instantly the snake is busily engaged in subduing what appears to be its frenzied victim. Actually, this is what has happened:—In that twisting movement the lizard has snapped off its tail. The muscles of the discarded member have been thrown into a state of great excitability—evidently a provision of Nature. Meanwhile, an abbreviated lizard has, under cover of the excitement occasioned by the antics of the tail, glided slyly for a safe retreat.

In catching some of the ground lizards among leaves—by slapping the hand down suddenly over a stalked specimen—the writer has many times been deceived and permitted lizards to escape, owing to a reptile's tail having become detached by the blow when it snapped and twisted

among the leaves with such a commotion that the hand involuntarily made a fresh grab for it; then, a second commotion showed the consequent escape of the lizard itself, which had been primarily the prisoner. A number of the geckos run away from danger with the thick tail well elevated and the animal parts with the caudal member at barely a touch, when the tail jumps and wriggles in a manner sure to attract the attention of the enemy.

In this casting off of the tail the organ is not "disjointed," as is often the popular idea. Owing to a curious structure of the caudal vertebræ the break occurs in the middle of a vertebral joint and the broken end of bone immediately begins a reconstructive process, resulting in a new tail. The new member is completed in a few months. It is seldom as long as the original one, nor covered with a normal scalation.

*Changes of Color.* Decided, though involuntary, changes of the body hues may be observed among several of the families. The process is influenced by light, temperature, excitement and the health of the individual. It is a mistake to imagine the color changes to be strictly in line of protection to the lizard in immediately conforming to the colors of surfaces on which the animal rests. A specimen capable of exhibiting all phases of coloration between a dull brown to an emerald green may for some time rest upon a dark tree trunk and be clad in a suit of conspicuous steel-gray; from this hue it may transform into a livid green; a few minutes later it may jump among the leaves and shrubbery, where it takes on an almost blackish hue. In fiction, theory is an excellent stand-by. Who can blame certain romantic authors for elaborating upon such an admirable point as the "power" displayed by a dull brown lizard to jump upon a leaf and transform into a leafy green, thence upon a tree trunk where it immediately turns brown again, and from there, possibly, upon a gorgeous flower where the reptile assumes a hue to match the richly-colored petals? The writer once observed an experiment made by a student who