

reptile contain acrid elements which contaminate the blood, and that the said herb can mitigate their effect." So far my friend.

Cyprus always abounded in serpents, whence among its many names it got that of Ophiusa. In the village of Tremithus there is a family believed to be endowed with the gift or virtue of curing persons bitten by snakes. Étienne de Lusignan in his *Chorographia* (Bologna, 1573, p. 22a) says that in his day men were found who caught all kinds of snakes, and were bitten by them without feeling any harm. They believe themselves to be the descendants of the ancient Ophiogenes, a Cypriot family, who held the wound of a person who had been bitten to their lips, and by sucking it healed him. Nor had the snakes any power against them. When the Romans held the island, in wonderment at this power they sent Exagon, a member of the family, to Rome, where people saw and marvelled at the truth of what they had heard. Pliny, XXVIII. 3, writes "In certain men the whole body is endowed with a charm: thus members of those families which are a terror to serpents heal persons bitten by a mere touch, or slight suction. Of this kind are the Psylli and Marsi, and those who in Cyprus are called Ophiogenes. One of this race, Exagon by name, was sent to Rome, and by order of the consuls, to try his power, thrown into a cask full of snakes, which, to the wonder of all, fondled about him." (Cf. Cyprianos, *History of Cyprus*, 4to., Venice, 1788, pp. 398—400).