

4. A title of respect.

**SERF**, *n.* [Fr. *serf*; L. *servus*. See *Serve*.] A servant or slave employed in husbandry, and in some countries, attached to the soil and transferred with it. The *serfs* in Poland are slaves. *Core.*

**SERGE**, *n.* [Fr. *serge*; Sp. *xerga*, coarse freeze, and jargon; It. *sargia*, a coverlet; D. *sergie*.]

A woollen quilted stuff manufactured in a loom with four treddles, after the manner of rattens. *Encyc.*

**SERGEANT**, *n.* *s'arjent*. [Fr. *sergent*; It. *sergente*; Sp. Port. *sargento*; from L. *serviens*, serving, for so was this word written in Latin. But Castle deduces the word

from the Persian سرچنك sarchank or sarjank, a prefect, a subaltern military officer. See Cast. Col. 336. If this is correct, two different words are blended.]

1. Formerly, an officer in England, nearly answering to the more modern bailiff of the hundred; also, an officer whose duty was to attend on the king, and on the lord high steward in court, to arrest traitors and other offenders. This officer is now called *serjeant at arms*, or *mace*. There are at present other officers of an inferior kind, who attend mayors and magistrates to execute their orders.

2. In *military affairs*, a non-commissioned officer in a company of infantry or troop of dragoons, armed with a halbert, whose duty is to see discipline observed, to order and form the ranks, &c.

3. In *England*, a lawyer of the highest rank, and answering to the doctor of the civil law. *Blackstone.*

4. A title sometimes given to the king's servants; as *sergeant surgeon*, servant surgeon. *Johnson.*

**SERGEANTRY**, *n.* *s'arjentry*. In *England*, serjeantry is of two kinds; *grand serjeantry*, and *petit serjeantry*. *Grand serjeantry*, is a particular kind of knight service, a tenure by which the tenant was bound to do some special honorary service to the king in person, as to carry his banner, his sword or the like, or to be his butler, his champion or other officer at his coronation, to lead his host, to be his marshal, to blow a horn when an enemy approaches, &c. *Cowel. Blackstone.*

*Petit serjeantry*, was a tenure by which the tenant was bound to render to the king annually some small implement of war, as a bow, a pair of spurs, a sword, a lance, or the like. *Littleton.*

**SERGEANTSHIP**, *n.* *s'argentship*. The office of a serjeant.

**SERGE-MAKER**, *n.* A manufacturer of serges.

**SERICEOUS**, *a.* [L. *sericus*, from *sericum*, silk.]

Pertaining to silk; consisting of silk; silky. In *botany*, covered with very soft hairs pressed close to the surface; as a *sericeous* leaf. *Martyn.*

**SERIES**, *n.* [L. This word belongs probably to the Shemitic שר, שר, שר, the primary sense of which is to stretch or strain.]

1. A continued succession of things in the

same order, and bearing the same relation to each other; as a *series* of kings; a *series* of successors.

2. Sequence; order; course; succession of things; as a *series* of calamitous events.

3. In *natural history*, an order or subdivision of some class of natural bodies. *Encyc.*

4. In *arithmetic and algebra*, a number of terms in succession, increasing or diminishing in a certain ratio; as *arithmetical series* and *geometrical series*. [See *Progression*.]

**SERIN**, *n.* A song bird of Italy and Germany.

**SERIOUS**, *a.* [Fr. *serieux*; Sp. *serio*; It. *serio*, *serioso*; L. *serius*.]

1. Grave in manner or disposition; solemn; not light, gay or volatile; as a *serious* man; a *serious* habit or disposition.

2. Really intending what is said; being in earnest; not jesting or making a false pretense. Are you *serious*, or in jest?

3. Important; weighty; not trifling.

The holy Scriptures bring to our ears the most *serious* things in the world. *Young.*

4. Particularly attentive to religious concerns or one's own religious state.

**SERIOUSLY**, *adv.* Gravely; solemnly; in earnest; without levity. One of the first duties of a rational being is to inquire *seriously* why he was created, and what he is to do to answer the purpose of his creation.

**SERIOUSNESS**, *n.* Gravity of manner or of mind; solemnity. He spoke with great *seriousness*, or with an air of *seriousness*.

2. Earnest attention, particularly to religious concerns.

That spirit of religion and *seriousness* vanished all at once. *Atterbury.*

**SERMOCINATION**, *n.* Speech-making. [Not used.] *Peachment.*

**SERMOCINATOR**, *n.* One that makes sermons or speeches. [Not in use.]

**SERMON**, *n.* [Fr. from L. *sermo*, from the root of *sero*, the primary sense of which is to throw or thrust. See *Assert*, *Insert*.]

1. A discourse delivered in public by a licensed clergyman for the purpose of religious instruction, and usually grounded on some text or passage of Scripture. Sermons are extemporary addresses, or written discourses.

His preaching much, but more his practice wrought.

A living sermon of the truths he taught. *Dryden.*

2. A printed discourse.

**SERMON**, *v. t.* To discourse as in a sermon. [Little used.]

2. To tutor; to lesson; to teach. [Little used.] *Shak.*

**SERMON**, *v. i.* To compose or deliver a sermon. [Little used.] *Milton.*

**SERMONING**, *n.* Discourse; instruction; advice. [Not in use.] *Chaucer.*

**SERMONIZE**, *v. i.* To preach. *Bp. Nicholson.*

2. To inculcate rigid rules. *Chesterfield.*

3. To make sermons; to compose or write a sermon or sermons. [This is the sense in which this verb is generally used in the U. States.]

**SERMONIZER**, *n.* One that composes sermons.

**SERMONIZING**, *ppr.* Preaching; inculcating rigid precepts; composing sermons.

**SER MOUNTAIN**, *n.* A plant of the genus *Laserpitium*; laserwort; seseli.

*Lee. Johnson.*

**SEROON**, *n.* [Sp. *seron*, a frail or basket.] 1. A seroon of almonds is the quantity of two hundred pounds; of anise seed, from three to four hundred weight; of Castile soap, from two hundred and a half to three hundred and three quarters. *Encyc.*

2. A bale or package.

**SEROSITY**, *n.* [Fr. *serosité*. See *Serum*.] In *medicine*, the watery part of the blood. *Encyc.*

**SEROTINE**, *n.* A species of bat.

**SEROUS**, *a.* [Fr. *séieux*. See *Serum*.]

1. Thin; watery; like whey; used of that part of the blood which separates in coagulation from the grumous or red part.

2. Pertaining to serum. *Arbutnot.*

**SERPENT**, *n.* [L. *serpens*, creeping; *serpo*, to creep. Qu. Gr. *ερπω*; or from a root in Sr. In Welsh, *sarf*, a serpent, seems to be from *sâr*. The Sanscrit has the word *sarpa*, serpent.]

1. An animal of the order *Serpentes*, [creepers, crawlers,] of the class *Amphibia*. Serpents are amphibious animals, breathing through the month by means of lungs only; having tapering bodies, without a distinct neck; the jaws not articulated, but dilatable, and without feet, fins or ears. Serpents move along the earth by a winding motion, and with the head elevated. Some species of them are viviparous, or rather ovi-viviparous; others are oviparous; and several species are venomous. *Encyc.*

2. In *astronomy*, a constellation in the northern hemisphere, containing, according to the British catalogue, sixty four stars.

3. An instrument of music, serving as a base to the cornet or small shawm, to sustain a chorus of singers in a large edifice. It is so called from its folds or wreaths. *Encyc.*

4. Figuratively, a subtil or malicious person.

5. In *mythology*, a symbol of the sun. *Serpent stones* or *snake stones*, are fossil shells of different sizes, found in strata of stones and clays. *Encyc.*

**SERPENT-CUCUMBER**, *n.* A plant of the genus *Trichosanthes*.

**SERPENT-EATER**, *n.* A fowl of Africa that devours serpents.

**SERPENT-FISH**, *n.* A fish of the genus *Tania*, resembling a snake, but of a red color. *Diel. Nat. Hist.*

[Qu. *Cepola tania* or *rubescens*, Linné, the band-fish, Fr. *ruban*.]

**SERPENT'S-TONGUE**, *n.* A plant of the genus *Ophioglossum*.

**SERPENTARIA**, *n.* A plant, called also snake root; a species of *Aristolochia*. *Encyc.*

**SERPENTARIUS**, *n.* A constellation in the northern hemisphere, containing seventy four stars.

**SERPENTINE**, *a.* [L. *serpentinus*, from *serpens*.]

1. Resembling a serpent; usually, winding or turning one way and the other, like a