SERINGHAM, an island formed by the Cavery, oppo­site to Trichinopoly, in the Carnatic. The river separates into two branches, and about thirteen miles eastward these branches again approach ; but the northern, which is at this place twenty feet lower than the southern branch, is permit­ted to run waste into the sea, and is termed the Coleroon ; whilst the southern, which retains the name of Cavery, is led into a variety of channels to irrigate the province of Tan- jore. Near the east end of the island is formed an immense mound, to prevent the waters of the Cavery from descending into the Coleroon. This island is celebrated for two Hindu temples, the largest of which is situated about a mile from the western extremity of the island, and is surrounded by seven square enclosures built of brick, the walls of which are twenty-five feet in height and four feet in thickness. These enclosures are at the distance of 350 feet from each other, and have each four gates opposite the cardinal points. The outward wall is nearly four miles in circumference, and its gateway to the south is ornamented with pillars, several of which are single stones thirty-three feet in length and five in diameter. The British pay so much deference to the Hindu superstitions, that no European has yet entered this temple. It is resorted to from all parts of India by pilgrims seeking absolution for their sins. A tax is levied on them ; and this fund, besides supporting a number of dancing girls, who are prostitutes to the Brahmins, yields a revenue to the British government. In 1751, during the siege of Trichinopoly, the French and their allies took possession of the island of Seringham. In 1752, the French force was com­pelled to surrender to Major Laurence. The Hindu sanc­

tuaries in these temples were respected by the troops of both nations, neither of whom sought access into the tem­ples.

SERINO, a city of Italy, in the Neapolitan province of Ulteriore. It stands between two hills, and contains ten parish churches, with 7500 inhabitants, who are employed in making woollen goods and in spinning silk. There is also a very large annual fair held at Serino ; and near to it are the ruins of the ancient Roman city Sabatia.

SERLE’S Island, in the Southern Pacific Ocean. It is seven or eight miles long, and four or five broad, with a la­goon in the middle. Long. 223. E. Lat. 18. 18. S.

SERMATTA, an island in the Eastern Seas, about twen­ty-two miles in length and six in breadth. Long. 129.13. E. Lat. 8. 9. S.

SERONGE, a town of Hindustan, in the Mahratta ter­ritories, and province of Malwah. It is situated in a fine open country, well cultivated, and has the remains of ancient prosperity and greater population than at present. The bazaars are strong, and built of stone; and a large caravanse­rai still remains. The adjacent country is an open plain. It was formerly the scene of the Pindaric plunderers ; and the villages are in consequence mostly in ruins. It is 165 miles north-east from Oojain, 389 from Benares, 595 from Bombay, 849 from Calcutta. Long. 78. E. Lat. 24. 8. N.

SERPENS, in *Astronomy,* a constellation in the north­ern hemisphere, called more particularly *Serpens Ophiuchi.* The stars in the constellation Serpens are, in Ptolemy’s ca­talogue, eighteen; in Tycho’s, thirteen; in Hevelius’s, twen­ty-two ; and in the British catalogue, sixty-four.

SERPENTS, or OPHIDIAN REPTILES.

Ιν our article Reptilia (see *Eneyclopædia Britannica,* vol. xix. p. 150) we deemed it advisable to postpone the con­sideration of the Ophidian order, in the hope that our readers might be benefited by the termination of MM. Dumeril and Bibron’s work, the most complete and careful publication by which the history of the reptile race has been as yet il­lustrated.@@1 But having been disappointed in that expecta­tion, we proceed to fill up our sketch of the class in ques­tion from other equally authentic sources. The student will bear in mind that our present treatise, relating to the third great order of reptiles, called Ophidia (from ὄφις, a *serpent),* interpolates at the page above referred to, and connects, in the natural system, the Sauria, or lizard-like reptiles, with the Batrachia or frogs, sirens, and salaman­ders. We also take leave to remind our readers (and this the more emphatically, seeing that the imperfect treatise now put forth is the last of the zoological essays for this work likely to proceed from the present pen), that the study of nature is a high and solemn calling, for the proper per­formance of which, according to the measure of each capa­city, men are as accountable to their Creator as they are for the discharge of all other duties, whether moral, intel­lectual, or professional. We may not say to him who de­sires an entrance into that magnificent temple which God has erected in his works, “ Take off thy shoes, for the place on which thou standest is holy ground ;” but we shall say, “ Divest yourself of arrogance, conceit, and self-delusion ; worship closely, continuously, and fervently ; and ever bear in mind that you are yourself a reptile, debarred by the very constitution of your nature from seeing any thing other­wise than in a glass darkly.” Should not this feeling act as a monitor in favour of humility and distrust? From

whence come contentions among you ? From ignorance and folly, from the blinding effect produced by the undue importance which every man is apt to attach to his own small doings, and the frequent absence of that kindly con­sideration with which each Christian observer should view the labours both of predecessor and contemporary. It is indeed woful to think that those to whom God has given a taste for pursuits in themselves so pleasing and consola­tory should so often disgrace their lofty calling by meanness and malice, and that irritability and “ all uncharitableness” should in any way arise among men who, when not wil­lingly blinded, may perceive at least a glimpse of what the divine Milton (with how much of inward light, though him­self so “ dim-suffused!”) has beautifully called “ the bright countenance of truth shining amid the still air of delightful studies.” If naturalists are the priests of nature, then let them bear in mind that theirs is no vain or selfish ministra­tion, and so conduct themselves

As ever in their great task-master’s eye.

The exact lines of demarcation which separate the pri­mary orders of the reptile race are somewhat difficult to draw, as in truth must always be the case wherever there are strong affinities of form and habits. *Natura non fαcit saltum,* is a saying the truth of which the student of her manifold wonders must ever remember ; and in our pre­sent department especially, there are several very singular creatures, which so combine the characters of two conti­guous orders, that well-instructed naturalists differ as to whether they should terminate the one or commence the other. Thus Baron Cuvier’s last *Ophidian* genus is *Caeilia,* which Professor Bell regards as a Batrachian reptile, or ra-

***@@@1 Erpétοlοgie Générαle, οu Histoire Naturelle complète des Reptiles,*** four vole. 8vo, with plates (containing hitherto only the Chelonian and a large portion of the Saurian orders). Paris, 1834-38.