universal even much later: *e.g.* in the 14th century, Sir Henry Percy, the earl marshal, or Sir John Cobham, Lord Oldcastle. The process by which the title lost all connotation of nobility would open up the whole question of the evolution of classes in England (see Gentleman). In the case of baronets the prefix “Sir” before the Christian name was ordained by King James I. when he created the order.

The old use of “ Sir ” as the style of the clergy, representing a translation of *dominus,* would seem to be of later origin; in *Guillaume le Mareschal* even a high dignitary of the church is still *maistre* (master): *e.g.* “Maistre Pierres li cardonals ” (Z. 11399). It survived until the honorific prefix "Reverend ” became stereotyped as a clerical title in the 17th century. It was thus used in Shakespeare’s day: witness “ Sir Hugh Evans,” the Welsh parson in *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* In the English universities there is a curious survival of this use of “ Sir ” for *dominus,* members of certain colleges, technically still “ clerks,” being entered in the books with the style of “ Sir ” without the Christian name *(e.g. "*Sir Jones ”).

In ordinary address the title “ Sir,” like the French *Monsieur,* is properly applied to any man of respectability, according to circumstances. Its use in ordinary conversation, as readers of Boswell will realize, was formerly far more common than is now the case; nor did its employment imply the least sense of inferiority on the part of those who used it. The general decay of good manners that has accompanied the rise of democracy in Great Britain has, however, tended to banish its use, together with that of other convenient forms of politeness, from spoken intercourse. As an address between equals it has all but vanished from social usage, though it is still correct in addressing a stranger to call him “ Sir.” In general it is now used in Great Britain as a formal style, *e.g.* in letters or in addressing the chairman of a meeting; it is also used in speaking to an acknowledged superior, *e.g.* a servant to his master, or a subaltern to his colonel. “ Sir ” is also the style used in addressing the king or a prince of the blood royal (the French form “ Sire ” is obsolete).

In the United States, on the other hand, or at least in certain parts of it, the address is still commonly used by people of all classes among themselves, no relation of inferiority or superiority being in general implied.

The feminine equivalent of the title “sir” is legally “ dame” *(domina)*; but in ordinary usage it is “lady,” thus recalling the original identity of the French *sire* with the English “ lord.” (W. A. P.)

**SIRAJGANJ,** a town of British India, in the Pabna district of Eastern Bengal and Assam, on the right bank of the Jamuna or main stream of the Brahmaputra, 6 hours by steamer from the railway terminus at Goalundo. It is the chief river mart for jute in northern Bengal, with several jute presses. The jute mills were closed after the earthquake of 1897. Pop. (1901) 23,114.

**SIRDAR,** or Sardar (Persian *sardar,* meaning a leader or officer), a title applied to native nobles in India, *e.g.* the sirdars of the Deccan. Sirdar Bahadur is an Indian military distinction; and Sirdar is now the official title of the commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army.

**SIREN,** a name derived from the Greek Sirens (see below) for an acoustical signalling instrument specially used in lighthouses, &c. (see Lighthouse), and applied by analogy to certain other forms of whistle. In zoology the siren *(Siren lacertina),* or “ mud-eel ” of the Americans, one of the perennibranchiate tailed batrachians, is the type of the family *Sirenidae,* chiefly distinguished from the *Proteidae* by the structure of the jaws, which, instead of being beset with small teeth, are covered by a horny sheath like a beak; there are, however, rasp-like teeth on the palate, and a few on the inner side of the lower jaw, in­serted on the splenial bone. The body is eel-like, black or blackish, and only the fore-limbs are present, but are feeble and furnished with four fingers. It grows to a length of three feet and inhabits marshes in North and South Carolina, Florida and Texas. A second closely-allied genus of this family is *Pseudobranchus,* differing in having a single branchial aperture on each side instead of three, and only three fingers. The only species, *P. striatus,* is a much smaller creature, growing to six inches only, and striated black and yellow; it inhabits Georgia and Florida.

As E. D. Cope has first shown, the siren must be regarded as a degenerate rather than a primitive type. He has observed that in young specimens of *Siren lacertina* (the larva is still un­known) the gills are rudimentary and functionless, and that it is only in large adult specimens that they are fully developed in structure and function; he therefore concludes that the sirens are the descendants of a terrestrial type of batrachians, which passed through a metamorphosis like the other members of their class, but that more recently they have adopted a permanently aquatic life, and have resumed their branchiae by reversion. From what we have said above about *Proteus* and similar forms, it is evident that the “ perennibranchiates ” do not constitute a natural group.

See E. D. Cope, “ Batrachia of North America,” *Bull. U.S. Nat· Mus.* No. 34 (1889), p. 223.

**SIRENIA,** the name (in reference to the supposed mermaid-like appearance of these animals when suckling their young) of an order of aquatic placental mammals, now represented by the manati (or manatee) and dugong, and till recently also by the rhytina. Although in some degree approximating in external form to the Cetacea, these animals differ widely in structure from the members of that order, and have a totally distinct ancestry.

The existing species present the following leading characteristics. The head is rounded and not, disproportionate in size as compared with the trunk, from which it is scarcely separated by any externally visible constriction or neck. Nostrils valvular, separate, and placed above the fore-part of the obtuse, truncated muzzle. Eyes very small, with imperfectly formed eyelids, capable, however, of con­traction, and with a well-developed nictitating membrane. Ear without any, conch. Mouth of small or moderate size, with tumid lips beset with stiff bristles. General form of the body depressed fusiform. No dorsal fin. Tail flattened and horizontally expanded. Fore-limbs paddle-shaped, the digits being enveloped in a common cutaneous covering, though sometimes rudiments of nails are present. No trace of hind-limbs. External surface covered with a tough, finely wrinkled or rugous skin, naked, or with sparsely scattered fine hairs.

The skeleton is remarkable for the massiveness and density of most of the bones, especially the skull and ribs, which add to the specific gravity of these slow-moving animals, and aid in keeping them to the bottom of the shallow waters in which they dwell, while feeding on aquatic vegetables. The skull presents many peculiarities, among which may be indicated the large size and backward position of the nasal aperture, and the downward flexure of the front of both jaws. The nasal bones are absent, or rudimentary and attached to the edge of the frontals, far away from the middle line; but in some extinct species these bones, though small, are normal in situation and relations. In the spinal column none of the vertebrae are united together to form a sacrum, and the flat ends of the bodies do not ossify separately, so as to form disk-like epiphyses in the young state, as in nearly all other mammals. The anterior caudal vertebrae have well-developed chevron-bones. In one genus *(Manatus)* there are only six cervical vertebrae. There are no clavicles. The humerus has a small but distinct trochlear articulation at the elbow­joint; and the bones of the fore-arm are about equally developed, and generally welded together, at both, extremities. The carpus is short and broad, and the digits five, in number, with moderately elongated and flattened phalanges, which are never increased beyond the number usual in Mammalia. The pelvis is rudimentary, con­sisting of a pair of bones suspended at some distance from the verte­bral column.

Two kinds of teeth, incisors and molars, separated by a wide interval, are generally present. The former may be developed into tusks in the upper jaw, or may be quite rudimentary. The molars vary much in character. In one genus *(Rhytina)* no teeth of any kind are present, at least in the adult. In all, the anterior part of the palate, and a corresponding surface on the prolonged symphysis of the lower jaw, are covered with rough horny plates of peculiar structure, which doubtless assist in mastication. The tongue is small and fixed in position, with a surface resembling that of the aforesaid, plates. The salivary glands are largely developed. The stomach is compound, being divided by a valvular constriction into two principal cavities, the first of which is provided with a glandular pouch near the cardiac end, and the second usually with a pair of elongated, conical, caecal sacs or diverticula. The intestinal canal is long, and with very muscular walls. There is a caecum, either simple, conical, and with extremely thick walls, as in *Halicore,* or cleft, as in *Manatus.* The apex of the heart is deeply cleft between the ventricles. The principal arteries form extensive and complex network-like structures, *retia mirabilia.* The lungs are long and