the *Planches enluminées* (721); in 1780 Buffon *(Oiseaux,* vii. P. 330) published some additional information derived from Querhoent, saying also that it was to be seen in some English menageries; and the following year J. Latham *(Synopsis,* i. p. 20, pl. 2) described and figured it from three examples which he had seen alive in England. None of these authors, however, gave the bird a scientific name, and the first conferred upon it seems to have been that of *Falco serpentarius,* inscribed on a plate bearing date 1779, by John Frederick Miller *(Ill. Nat. History,* xxviii.),. which plate appears also in Shaw’s *Cimelia Physica* (No. 28) and is a misleading caricature. In 1786 Scopoli called it *Otis secretarius—*thus referring it to the Bustards,@@1 and Cuvier in 1798 designated the genus to which it belonged, and of which it still remains the sole representative, *Serpentarius.* Succeeding systematists have, however, encumbered it with many other names, among which the generic terms *Gypogeranus* and *Ophiο- theres,* and the specific epithets *reptilivorus* and require

mention here.@@2 The Secretary-bird is of remarkable appearance, standing nearly 4 ft. in height, the great length of its legs giving it a resemblance to a Crane or a Heron; but unlike those birds its tibiae are feathered all the way down. From the back of the head and the nape hangs, loosely and in pairs, a series of black elongated feathers, capable of erection and dilation in periods of excitement.@@3 The skin round the eyes is bare and of an orange colour. The head, neck and upper parts of the body and wing- coverts are bluish grey; but the carpal feathers, including the primaries, are black, as also are the feathers of the vent and tibiae—the last being in some examples tipped with white. The tail-quills are grey for the greater part of their length, then barred with black and tipped with white; but the two middle feathers are more than twice as long as those next to them, and drooping downwards present a very unique appearance.

Its chief prey consists of insects and reptiles, and as a foe to snakes it is held in high esteem; although it is undoubtedly also destructive to young game. It seems to possess a strange partiality for the destruction of snakes, and successfully attacks the most venomous species, striking them with its knobbed wings and kicking forwards at them with its feet, until they are rendered incapable of offence, when it swallows them. The nest is a huge structure, placed in a bush or tree, and in it two white eggs, spotted with rust-colour, are laid. The young remain in the nest for a long while, and even when four months old are unable to stand upright They are very fre­quently brought up tame. The Secretary-bird is found, but not very abundantly and only in some localities, over the greater part of Africa, especially in the south, extending northwards on the west to the Gambia and in the interior to Khartum.

The systematic position of the genus *Serpentarius* has long been a matter of discussion, and is still one of much interest, though of late classifiers have been pretty well agreed in placing it in the order *Accipitres.* Most of them, however, have shown great want of perception by putting it in the family *Falconidae.* No anatomist can doubt its forming a peculiar family, *Serpentariidae,* differing more from the *Falcοnidae* than do the *Vulturidae;* and the fact of A. Milne-Edwards having recognized in the Miocene of the Allier the fossil bone of a species of this genus, 5. *robustus (Ois.foss. France,* ii. pp. 465-468, pl. 186, figs. 1-6), proves that it is an ancient form, one possibly carrying on a direct and not much modified descent from a generalized form, whence may have sprung not only the *Falconidae* but perhaps the progenitors of the *Ardeidae* and *Cicοniidae,* as well as the puzzling *Cariamidae* (Seriema, *q.v.).* (A. N.)

SECRETARY OF STATE, in England, the designation of certain important members of the administration. The ancient English monarchs were always attended by a learned ecclesi­astic, known at first as their clerk, and afterwards as secretary, who conducted the royal correspondence; but it was not until the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth that these functionaries were called secretaries of state. Upon the direction of public affairs passing from the privy council to the cabinet after 1688 the secretaries of state began to assume those high duties

which now render their office one of the most influential of an administration.

Until the reign of Henry VIII. there was generally only one secretary of state, but at the end of his reign a second principal secretary was appointed. Owing to the increase of business con­sequent upon the union of Scotland, a third secretary, in 1708, was created, but a vacancy occurring in this office in 1746 the third secretaryship was dispensed with until 1768, when it was again in­stituted to take charge of the increasing colonial business. How- ever, in 1782 the office was again abolished, and the charge of the colonies transferred to the home secretary; but owing to the war with France in 1794 a third secretary was once more appointed to superintend the business of the war department, and seven years later the colonial business was attached to his department. In 1854 a fourth secretary of state for the exclusive charge of the war department and in 1858 a fifth secretaryship for India were created. There are therefore now five principal secretaries of state, four of whom, with their political under-secretaries, occupy scats in the House of Commons. One of these secretaries of state is always a member of the House of Lords. The secretaries of state arc the only authorized channels through which the royal pleasure is signified to any part of the body politic, and the counter-signature of one of them is necessary to give validity to the sign manual. The secretaries of state constitute but one office, and are coordinate in rank and equal in authority. Each is competent in general to execute any part of the duties of the secretary of state, the division of duties being a mere matter of arrangement. For the existing division of duties, see under separate headings, Colonial Office, Foreign Office, &c.

In the United States the “ secretary of state ” is a member of the executive, who deals with foreign affairs, and who, in the event of a vacancy in the office of president, is next in suc­cession after the vice-president. The title of “ secretary ”— “ of the treasury,” “ of war,” &c.—is used for some other members of the executive. In various states there is an executive officer called “ secretary of state.”

SECT, a body of persons holding distinctive or separate doctrines or opinions, especially in matters of religion; thus there are various sects among the Jews, the Mahommedans, and the Buddhists, &c. In the Christian Church it has usually a hostile or depreciatory sense and is applied, like “ sectary,” to all religious bodies outside the one to which the user of the term belongs.

The latter use has been influenced by the false etymology which makes the word mean “cut off ” (Lat. *secare,* to cut). The derivation has been long a matter of dispute. The Latin *secta* was used in classical Latin first of a way, a trodden or beaten path; it seems to be derived from *secare,* to cut, cf. the phrase *secare viam,* to travel, take one’s way, Gr. τiμtw 63⅛. From the phrase *sectam sequi,* to follow in the footsteps of any one, the word came to mean a party, following, faction. Another transferred sense is a manner or mode of life, so *hanc sectam rationcmque vitae . . . secuti sumus* (Cic. *Cael.* 17, 40). It was also the regular word for a school of philosophy and so translates αtpeσts, lit. choice *(αiρuσθαι,* to choose), from which is derived “ heresy ” *(q.v.).* The Vulgate (N.T.) translates cuptσts sometimes by *secta,* sometimes by *haeresis.* In Med. Lat., besides these uses we find *secta* meaning a suit at law, a suit of clothes, and a following or suite. These meanings point to the derivation of *secta* adopted by Skeat *(Etym. Dict.,* 1910) ; which connects the word with *sequi,* to follow. Whichever derivation is accepted a “ sect ” does not mean a part “ cut off ” from the church.

SECTION (Lat. *sectio,* cutting, *secare,* to cut), the act of cutting or a part cut off, thus used of any division of a subject, as the paragraph of a book, article, statute, &c., of a division of land, of a town, &c., or a separate class of a community or race; the term is more particularly applied to a thin slice of any substance prepared for examination by the microscope (see Microtomy) or to a diagram of any structure showing the internal plan as if exposed by the cutting off of an external surface; thus, in architecture, a section is a drawing of a building cut in half, so as to show the relative height of the floors, the depth of the foundation and its footings, the framing of the roof, if in timber or iron, or the construction of the vault or dome, if in masonry. The term is also applied to the details of the structure, such as the cornice and the various mouldings showing their profile.

SECULAR (Lat. *saccularis,* of or belonging to an age or genera­tion, *saeculum),* a word with two main branches of meaning

(1) lasting or occurring for a long indefinite period of time, and

(2) non-spiritual, having no concern with religious or spiritual matters. The first sense, which is directly taken from the classical

@@@1 Curiously enough, Boddaert in 1783 omitted to give it a scientific name.

@@@2 The scientific synonymy of the species is given at great length by Drs Finsch and IÍartlaub *(Vögel Ost-Afrikas,* p. 93) and by R. B. Sharpe *(Cat. B. Brit. Museum,* i. p. 45).

@@@3 It is from the fancied resemblance of these feathers to the pens which a clerk is supposed to stick above his ear that the bird’s name of Secretary is really derived.