

# THE WEEKLY MIRROR.



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## The Weekly Mirror,

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WHERE

All kinds of JOB PRINTING will be executed at a cheap rate.

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## NATURAL HISTORY.

### SERPENTS &c.

Linnaeus divides the Amphibia into two orders, Serpents and Reptiles. The Serpent tribe have neither fins, ears, nor feet, and their jaws are dilatable, and not articulated. The construction of their back bone enable them to advance with an elegant sinuous motion. It is composed of moveable articulations, and runs through the whole length of the body. Some of the species have the power of rendering their bodies perfectly stiff, which enables them to spring on their prey with great force and velocity. Most Serpents are covered with scales. The breast and abdomen are surrounded with ribs. Like quadrupeds they breathe through the mouth, by means of lungs. The head joins immediately to the body, and the jaws are so expansible that the animals can swallow prey which is thicker than themselves. The tongue is slender and forked. They change their skin twice a year; the old skin parting near the head, and the creature creeping from it by an undulatory kind of movement. The colours of the Serpent are, in general, exceedingly varied and beautiful.

Of the whole number of serpents the poisonous species constitute not more than one-sixth. They differ from the harmless kinds in having only two rows of true or proper teeth in the upper jaw, whilst the others have four; and in having long tubular fangs on each side of the head, the purpose of which is to convey the venom from a bag or receptacle at the base of these fangs into the wound made by their bite. A head wholly covered with small scales, and scales on the head and body furnished with a ridge or prominent middle line, are also signs, though more equivocal, than those first mentioned.

Reptiles have legs, and flat naked ears, devoid of auricles. Tortoises, Lizards, and Frogs are the principle tribes.

## BIOGRAPHY.

### WILLIAM THE FIRST.

Few princes have been more fortunate than William, surnamed the Conqueror; or were better entitled to prosperity and grandeur, for the abilities and vigour of mind which he displayed in all his conduct. His spirit was bold and enterprising, yet guided by prudence. His ambition, which was exorbitant, and lay little under the restraints of justice, and still less under those of humanity, ever submitted to the dictates of reason and sound policy. Born in an age when the minds of men were intractable, and unacquainted with submission, he was yet able to direct them to his purposes; and, partly from the ascendancy of his vehement disposition, partly from art and dissimulation, to establish an unlimited monarchy. Though not insensible to generosity, he was hardened against compassion; and seemed equally ostentatious in his clemency and in his severity.

The maxims of his administration were severe; but might have been useful, had they been solely employed in preserving order in an established government: they were ill calculated for softening the rigours which, under the most gentle management, are inseparable from conquest. His attempt against England was the last great enterprise of the kind, which, during the course of seven hundred years, has fully succeeded in Europe; and the force of his genius broke through those limits, which first the feudal institutions, then the refined policy of princes, have fixed to the several states of Christendom.

Though he rendered himself infinitely odious to his English subjects, he transmitted his power to posterity, and the throne is still filled by his descendants. A proof that the foundations which he laid were firm and solid; and that amidst all his violence, while he seemed only to gratify the present passion, he had still an eye toward futurity. His stature was tall, and the composition of his bones and muscles uncommonly strong: there was scarcely a man of that age who could bend his bow, or handle his arms. He died September 9. 1087, aged 63.

*Eastern Proverb.*—The wise man warms himself by the same firebrand with which the madman burneth the tent.

## WHERE DID HE GET THAT LAW?

In a neat and beautiful city, in one of the Northern States, lived a lawyer of eminence and talents. I do not know many particulars of his moral character; but he was notoriously profane. He had a negro boy, at whom his neighbors used to hear him swear with awful violence. One day, this gentleman met an elder of the Presbyterian church, who was also a lawyer, and said to him: "I wish sir, to examine into the truth of the Christian religion. What books would you advise me to read on the evidences of Christianity?"

The elder, surprised at the inquiry, replied:—"That is a question, sir, which you ought to have settled long ago. You ought not to have put off a subject so important to this late period of life."

"It is too late," said the inquirer. "I never knew much about it; but I always supposed that Christianity was rejected by the great majority of learned men. I intend however now to examine the subject thoroughly myself. I have upon me, as my physician says, a moral disease, under which I may live a year and a half or two years, but not probably longer. What books sir, would you advise me to read?"

"The Bible," said the elder.

"I believe you do not understand me," resumed the unbeliever, surprised in his turn; "I wish to investigate the truth of the Bible."

"I would advise you, sir," repeated the elder, "to read the Bible. And, he continued, 'I will give you my reasons: most infidels are very ignorant of the Scriptures. Now to reason on any subject with correctness, we must understand what it is about which we reason. In the next place, I consider the internal evidence of the truth of the Scriptures stronger than the external.'

"And where shall I begin?" inquired the unbeliever.—"At the New Testament?"

"No," said the elder; "at the beginning—at Genesis."

The infidel bought a Bible, went home, and sat down to the serious study of the Scriptures. He applied his strong and well disciplined powers of mind to the Bible, to try rigidly but impartially its truth. As he went on his perusal, he received occasional calls from the elder. The infidel freely remarked upon what he read, and stated his objections. He liked this passage, he thought that touching and beautiful, but he could not credit a third.