

similar form, the *lizards* and other Saurians, for this way their external form leads us, but their internal organization is nearer that of the frogs and toads. Upon these last I shall not dwell: all know that they begin life in the water like fishes; that they are at first without legs, or any instrument of motion but a tail, which by its undulations from side to side steers the apparently disproportionate body to which it is appended, and makes its way with rapidity through its native element. Few are ignorant that they first acquire a single pair of legs; and lastly, that, another pair being also acquired, they leave the water by myriads, and appear, without a tail, as four-footed, and, at certain times, noisy reptiles.

*Order 3.*—The general function of the *Ophidians* seems connected with almost the whole animal kingdom. The insects, frogs, and other reptiles, several birds and beasts, up as high as the *ruminant* and even the *carnivorous* tribes, become the prey of various species. They act the same part with land animals, that their analogues, the eels and other apod and cyclostomous fishes do with respect to those of the water. Some are analogues of the lion and the tiger, as the *Oriental Python* and the *Occidental Boa*, which sometimes exceed thirty feet in length, and are as thick as a man's body; while others compete with the minor predaceous beasts in the destruction they occasion amongst the lesser quadrupeds. But while the predaceous quadrupeds, with the exception of the *Hyena*, leave untouched the skeleton of the animals they devour, the *Ophidians* swallow the entire animal—flesh, and bone, and skin, and thus completely remove it from the face of nature; whereas the others, where they abound and are unmolested, make their domain like a charnel house, and deform the earth with the ghastly relics of their cruelty and voracity.