

I.

Boston, Aug. 19, 1817.

THE Committee appointed by the Linnæan Society, at their meeting on the 18th inst. for the purpose of collecting any evidence which may exist respecting a remarkable animal, denominated a *Sea Serpent*, reported to have recently been seen in and near the harbour of *Cape Ann*, have concluded on the following method of proceeding in the execution of their commission.

I. The examination to be confined to persons professing actually to have seen the animal in question.

II. Such persons to be examined as may be met with by either of the Committee, or by Hon. Lonson Nash of Gloucester, who is to be requested by a letter addressed to him from the Committee to undertake this service.

III. All testimony on the subject to be taken in writing, and after being deliberately read to the person testifying, to be signed by him, and sworn to before a magistrate. The examinations to be separate, and the matter testified by any witness not to be communicated until the whole evidence be taken.

IV. The persons testifying to be requested first to relate their recollections on the subject, which being taken down, the following questions to be proposed, if not rendered unnecessary by the statement given.

QUESTIONS.

1. When did you first see this animal ?
2. How often and how long at a time ?
3. At what times of the day ?
4. At what distance ?
5. How near the shore ?

6. What was its general appearance?
7. Was it in motion or at rest?
8. How fast did it move, and in what direction?
9. What parts of it were above the water and how high?
10. Did it appear jointed or only serpentine?
11. If serpentine, were its sinuosities vertical or horizontal?
12. How many distinct portions were out of water at one time?
13. What were its colour, length and thickness?
14. Did it appear smooth or rough?
15. What were the size and shape of its head, and had the head ears, horns, or other appendages?
16. Describe its eyes and mouth.
17. Had it gills or breathing holes, and where?
18. Had it fins or legs, and where?
19. Had it a mane or hairs, and where?
20. How did its tail terminate?
21. Did it utter any sound?
22. Did it appear to pursue, avoid or notice any thing?
23. Did you see more than one?
24. How many persons saw it?
25. State any other remarkable fact.

II.

Gloucester, August 28, 1817.

JOHN DAVIS,
JACOB BIGELOW, and } Esq's.
FRANCIS C. GRAY,

Gentlemen,

I have received your favour of the 19th inst. In that communication you request my assistance, in collecting evidence relative to a strange marine animal, that has appeared in the harbour in this place; and I have most cheerfully complied with your request. I send you, herewith, the testimony that I have taken. The subject is calculated to excite much interest, at home and abroad.

The deponents were interrogated separately, no one knowing what the others had testified, and though they differ in some few particulars, still, for the most part, they agree.

I am confident, from my own observation, that Mr. Allen is mistaken, as to the motion of the animal. His motion is vertical. I saw him, on the 14th instant, for nearly half an hour. I should judge he was two hundred and fifty yards from me, when the nearest. I saw him twice with a glass for a short time, and at other times, with the naked eye. At that distance, I could not take in the two extremes of the animal that were visible, *at one view*, with a glass. His manner of turning is well described in Messrs. Pearson's and Goffney's depositions. The persons who have deposed before me, are men of fair and unblemished characters. The interrogatories that you sent to me were all put to the witnesses; but generally, I have omitted inserting them in the depositions, when the witnesses declared their inability to answer them.

I think Mr. Allen is likewise mistaken, as to the distinct portions of the animal that were visible, at one time. I saw, at no time, more than eight distinct portions; though more may have been visible; still, I cannot believe that *fifty* distinct portions were seen, at one time. I believe the animal to be straight, and that the apparent bunches were caused by his vertical motion.

I have questioned Daniel Goffney, who was in the boat with his brother Matthew, when he fired at the animal, and Daniel's answers corroborate Matthew's testimony.

Respectfully, gentlemen,

Your most ob't,

LONSON NASH.



III.

I, AMOS STORY of Gloucester, in the County of Essex, mariner, depose and say, that on the tenth day of August A. D. 1817. I saw a strange marine animal, that I believe to be a serpent, at the southward and eastward of Ten Pound Island, in the harbour in said Gloucester. It was between the hours of twelve and one o'clock when I first saw him, and he continued in sight for an hour and half. I was setting on the shore, and was about twenty rods from him when he was the nearest to me. His head appeared shaped much like the head of the sea turtle, and he carried his head from ten to twelve inches above the surface of the water. His head at that distance appeared larger than the head of any dog that I ever saw. From the back part of his head to the next part of him that was visible, I should judge to be three or four feet. He moved very rapidly through the water, I should say a mile in two, or at most, in three minutes. I saw no bunches on his back. On this day, I did not see more than ten or twelve feet of his body. I likewise saw, what I believe to be the same animal this day, viz. the twenty third of August, A. D. 1817. This was in the morning, about seven o'clock. He then lay perfectly still, extended on the water, and I should judge that I saw fifty feet of him at least.

I should judge that I was forty rods from him this day. I had a good spy-glass both days when I saw him. I continued looking at him about half an hour, and he remained still and in the same position, until I was called away. Neither his head nor tail were visible. His colour appeared to be a dark brown,

and when the sun shone upon him, the reflection was very bright. I thought his body was about the size of a man's body.

AMOS STORY.

Essex ss. Aug. 23, 1817. Personally appeared Amos Story, and made oath that the foregoing deposition by him subscribed is true, according to his best knowledge and belief.

COR. LONSON NASH, Jus. Pacis.



IV.

I SOLOMON ALLEN 3d, of Gloucester, in the county of Essex, Ship master, depose and say ; that I have seen a strange marine animal, that I believe to be a serpent, in the harbour in said Gloucester. I should judge him to be between eighty and ninety feet in length, and about the size of a half barrel, apparently having joints from his head to his tail. I was about one hundred and fifty yards from him, when I judged him to be of the size of a half barrel. His head formed something like the head of the rattle snake, but nearly as large as the head of a horse. When he moved on the surface of the water, his motion was slow, at times playing about in circles, and sometimes moving nearly straight forward. When he disappeared, he sunk apparently directly down, and would next appear at two hundred yards from where he disappeared, in two minutes. His colour was a dark brown, and I did not discover any spots upon him.

Question. When did you first see this animal ?

Answer. I saw him on the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth of August, A. D. 1817.

Q. How often, and how long at a time ?

A. I was in a boat on the twelfth inst. and was around him several times, within one hundred and fifty yards of him. On the thirteenth inst. I saw him nearly all the day, from the shore. I was on the beech, nearly on a level with him, and most of the time he was from one hundred and fifty to three hundred yards

from me. On the fourteenth, I saw him but once, and had not so good a view of him.

Q. What parts of it were above the surface of the water, and how high?

A. Its joints or bunches, appeared about eight or ten inches above the surface of the water.

Q. Did it bend its body up and down in moving, or to the right and left?

A. He moved to the right and left.

Q. How many distinct portions of it were out of water, at one time?

A. I should say fifty distinct portions.

Q. Did it appear smooth or rough?

A. It appeared rough and scaly.

Q. Had it ears, horns, or any other appendages?

A. I perceived none.

Q. How did its tail terminate?

A. He seemed to taper towards (what I thought) his tail, though I had no distinct view of his tail.

Q. Did it utter any sound.

A. Not in my hearing.

Q. Did it appear to pursue, avoid, or notice any thing?

A. It appeared to me to avoid the boat where I was, though afterwards, I saw him make towards a boat, in which was Mr. Goffney and others.

Q. Did you see more than one?

A. I did not.

Q. How many persons saw it?

A. Twenty or thirty persons were in view of me.

Q. Did he open his mouth when you saw him, and if so, how wide?

A. Yes, when I looked at him from the shore with a glass, at about two hundred yards distance, his mouth appeared to be open about ten inches. I had no glass, when I saw him from the boat.

Q. Did he carry his head above the surface of the water ?

A. Yes, at times, about two feet, then again he would carry the top of his head just on the surface of the water.

Q. Did he turn short and quick, and what was the form of the curve that he made, when he turned ?

A. He turned short and quick, and the first part of the curve that he made in turning resembled the link of a chain ; but when his head came parallel with his tail, his head and tail appeared near together.

SOLOMON ALLEN, 3d.

Essex ss. August 21, 1817. Personally appeared Solomon Allen the third, and made oath that the foregoing facts, by him subscribed, are true, according to his best knowledge and belief.

COR. LONSON NASH, Jus. Pacis.

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V.

I, EPES ELLERY, of Gloucester, in the County of Essex, Ship master, depose and say ; that on the 14th day of August, 1817, I saw a sea animal that I thought to be a serpent, in the harbour in said Gloucester. I was on an eminence, near low water mark, and about thirty feet above the level of the sea, when I saw him. I should judge that he was about one hundred and fifty fathoms from me. I saw the upper part of his head, and I should say about forty feet of the animal. He appeared to me to have joints, about the size of a two-gallon keg. I was looking at him with a spy-glass, when I saw him open his mouth, and his mouth appeared like that of the serpent ; the top of his head appeared flat. His motion when he turned was quick, but I will not express an opinion of his velocity. The first part of the curve that he made in turning was of the form of a staple, and as he approached towards his tail, he came near his body with his head, and then ran parallel with his tail, and his head and tail then appeared near together.

Q. At what time of the day did you see him ?

A. It was a little after sun set.

Q. What parts of it were above the surface of the water, and how high?

A. I did not count the number of bunches, but they appeared about six inches above the surface of the water.

Q. Were its sinuosities vertical or horizontal?

A. Vertical.

Q. Did it appear to pursue, avoid, or notice any thing?

A. It did not appear to avoid any thing. He appeared to be amusing himself, though there were several boats not far from him.

Q. Did you see more than one?

A. I did not.

Q. How many persons saw it?

A. There were fifteen or twenty persons, near where I was.

EPES ELLERY.

Essex ss. August 25, 1817. Personally appeared Epes Ellery, and made oath to the truth of the foregoing facts by him subscribed.

Cor. LONSON NASH, Jus. Pacis.



VI.

I, WILLIAM H. FOSTER, of Gloucester, in the county of Essex, merchant, depose and say: That on the fourteenth day of August, A. D. 1817, I first saw an uncommon sea animal, that I believe to have been a serpent, in the harbour in said Gloucester. When I first discovered him, his head was above the surface of the water, perhaps ten inches, and he made but little progress through the water. He was apparently shaded with light colours. He afterwards went in different directions, leaving on the surface of the water, marks like those made by skating on the ice. Then he would move in a straight line west, and would almost in an instant, change his course to east, bringing his head, as near as I could judge, to where his tail was; or in fact, to the extreme hinder part visible, raising himself as he turned, six or eight inches out of water, and shewing a body at least forty feet in length. On the seventeenth of August instant, I

again saw him. He came into the harbour, occasionally exhibiting parts of his body, which appeared like rings or bunches. As he drew near, and when opposite to me, there rose from his head or the most forward part of him, a prong or spear about twelve inches in height, and six inches in circumference at the bottom, and running to a small point.

Q. Might not the prong or spear that you saw, have been the tongue of the serpent ?

A. I thought not ; as I saw the prong before I saw the head ; but it might have been.

Q. At what distance was you, when you saw the spear of the serpent ?

A. I should judge forty rods ; I had a spy-glass when I saw the prong or spear.

Q. Did the animal appear round ?

A. He did.

Q. Did he appear jointed, or only serpentine ?

A. He appeared jointed.

Q. Were its sinuosities vertical, or horizontal ?

A. Vertical.

Q. What was its colour ?

A. It appeared brown.

Q. Did it appear smooth or rough ?

A. It appeared smooth.

Q. What was the size and shape of his head ?

A. At the distance where I was, his head appeared as large as a man's head ; but I cannot describe its shape.

Q. Did it appear to pursue, avoid, or notice objects ?

A. I thought it appeared to notice objects.

Q. How fast did it move ?

A. At the rate of a mile in a minute, at times, I have no doubt.

WILLIAM H. FOSTER.

Essex ss. August 27, 1817. Personally appeared William H. Foster, and made oath that the foregoing deposition, by him subscribed, is true, according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before LONSON NASH, Jus. of Peace.

VII.

L. MATTHEW GAFFNEY, of Gloucester, in the County of Essex, Ship carpenter, depose and say : That on the fourteenth day of August, A. D. 1817, between the hours of four and five o'clock in the afternoon, I saw a strange marine animal, resembling a serpent, in the harbour in said Gloucester. - I was in a boat, and was within thirty feet of him. His head appeared full as large as a four-gallon keg ; his body as large as a barrel, and his length that I saw, I should judge forty feet, at least. The top of his head was of a dark colour, and the under part of his head appeared nearly white, as did also several feet of his belly, that I saw. I supposed and do believe that the whole of his belly was nearly white. I fired at him, when he was the nearest to me. I had a good gun, and took good aim. I aimed at his head, and think I must have hit him. He turned towards us immediately after I had fired, and I thought he was coming at us ; but he sunk down and went directly under our boat, and made his appearance at about one hundred yards from where he sunk. He did not turn down like a fish, but appeared to settle directly down, like a rock. My gun carries a ball of eighteen to the pound ; and I suppose there is no person in town, more accustomed to shooting, than I am. I have seen the same animal at several other times, but never had so good a view of him, as on this day His motion was vertical, like the caterpillar.

Q. How fast did it move ?

A. I should say he moved at the rate of a mile in two, or at most, three minutes.

Q. Did it appear smooth or rough ?

A. I thought it smooth, though I was endeavouring to take aim at him, and will not say positively, that he was smooth, though that is still my belief.

Q. Does he turn quick and short, and if so, what is the form of path that he makes, in turning ?

A. He turns quick and short, and the first part of the curve that he makes in turning, is in the form of the staple ; but his head seems to approach rapidly towards his body, his head and

tail moving in opposite directions, and when his head and tail come parallel, they appear almost to touch each other.

Q. Did he appear more shy, after you had fired at him?

A. He did not; but continued playing as before.

Q. Who was in the boat with you, when you fired at the serpent?

A. My brother Daniel, and Augustin M. Webber.

MATTHEW GAFFNEY.

Essex ss. August 28, 1817. Then Matthew Gaffney made oath that the foregoing, by him subscribed, is true according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before LONSON NASH, Jus. of Peace.



VIII.

I, JAMES MANSFIELD, of Gloucester, in the county of Essex, merchant, depose and say: That I saw a strange creature, of enormous length, resembling a serpent. I think this was on the fifteenth of August, A. D. 1817. I should say he was from forty to sixty feet in length, extended on the surface of the water, with his head above the water about a foot. He remained in this position but a short time, and then started off very quick, with much greater velocity than I have seen him move with at any other time. I saw bunches on his back about a foot in height, when he lay extended on the water. His colour appeared to me black, or very dark. It was a little before six o' clock P. M. when I saw him. I should say, he moved a mile in five or six minutes.

Q. How near the shore was the serpent?

A. About one hundred and eighty yards from the shore where I stood.

Q. Were its sinuosities vertical, or horizontal?

A. Vertical.

Q. What were the size and shape of its head; and had it ears, horns, or any other appendages?

A. His head appeared to be about the size of the crown of a hat, at the distance from whence I saw him. The shape of his head I cannot describe, and I saw no ears, horns, or other appendages. I had no spy glass, and cannot describe him so minutely as I otherwise could. I have seen him at other times, but my view of him was not so good, as on this day.

JAMES MANSFIELD.

Essex ss. August 27, 1817. Then James Mansfield made oath to the truth of the foregoing deposition by him subscribed.

Before LONSON NASH, Jus. Pacis.



IX.

I. JOHN JOHNSTON, jun. of Gloucester, in the County of Essex, of the age of seventeen years, depose and say: That on the evening of the seventeenth day of August, A. D. 1817, between the hours of eight and nine o'clock, while passing from the shore in a boat, to a vessel lying in the harbour in said Gloucester, I saw a strange marine animal, that I believe to be a serpent, lying extended on the surface of the water. His length appeared to be fifty feet at least, and he appeared straight, exhibiting no protuberances. Capt. John Corliss and George Marble were in the boat with me. We were within two oars length of him, when we first discovered him, and were rowing directly for him. We immediately rowed from him, and at first concluded to pass by his tail; but fearing we might strike it with the boat, concluded to pass around his head, which we did, by altering our course. He remained in the same position, till we lost sight of him. We approached so near to him that I believe I could have reached him with my oar. There was not sufficient light to enable me to describe the animal.

JOHN JOHNSTON, jun.

Essex ss. August 25, 1817. Personally appeared John Johnston, jr. and made oath that the foregoing deposition, by him subscribed, is true according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before LONSON NASH, Jus. of Peace.

X.

I, WILLIAM B. PEARSON of Gloucester, in the County of Essex, merchant, depose and say: That I have, several times, seen a strange marine animal, that I believe to be a serpent, of great size. I have had a good view of him, only once, and this was on the 18th of August, A. D. 1817. I was in a sail boat, and when off Webber's cove (so called) in the harbour of said Gloucester, I saw something coming out of the cove; we hove to, not doubting but that it was the same creature that had been seen several times in the harbour, and had excited much interest among the inhabitants of Gloucester. James P. Collins was the only person with me. The serpent passed out under the stern of our boat, towards *Ten Pound Island*; then he stood in towards us again, and crossed our bow. We immediately exclaimed, 'here is the snake!' From what I saw of him, I should say that he was nothing short of seventy feet in length. I distinctly saw bunches on his back, and once he raised his head out of water. The top of his head appeared flat, and was raised seven or eight inches above the surface of the water. He passed by the bow of the boat, at about thirty yards distance. His colour was a dark brown. I saw him at this time about two minutes. His motion was vertical. His velocity at this time was not great; though at times, I have seen him move with great velocity, I should say at the rate of a mile in three minutes, and perhaps faster. His size I judged to be about the size of a half barrel. I saw Mr. Gaffney fire at him, at about the distance of thirty yards. I thought he hit him, and afterwards he appeared more shy. He turned very short, and appeared as limber and active as the eel, when compared to his size. The form of the curve when he turned in the water, resembled a staple; his head seemed to approach towards his body for some feet; then his head and tail appeared moving rapidly, in opposite directions, and when his head and tail were on parallel lines, they appeared not more than two or three yards apart.

Q. At what time of the day was this?

A. Between the hours of five and six, in the afternoon.

Q. How many distinct portions of it were out of water at one time?

A. Ten or twelve distinct portions.

Q. Can you describe his eyes and mouth?

A. I thought and believe, that I saw his eye at one time, and it was dark and sharp.

Q. How did its tail terminate?

A. I had not a distinct view of his tail; I saw no bunches towards, what I thought, the end of his tail, and I believe there were none. From where I judged his navel might be, to the end of his tail, there were no bunches visible.

WILLIAM B. PEARSON.

Essex ss. August 27, 1817. Then William B. Pearson made oath to the truth of the above.

Before LONSON NASH, Jus. of Peace.

XI.

SEWELL TOPPAN, master of the schooner *Laura*, declares: That on Thursday morning the 28th day of August, at about 9 o'clock A. M. at about two miles, or two and half miles east of the eastern point of Cape Ann, being becalmed, I heard one of my men call to the man at helm, "what is this coming towards us;" being engaged forward, I took no further notice till they called out again—I then got on top of the deck load, at which time I saw a singular kind of animal or fish, which I had never before seen, passing by our quarter, at distance of about forty feet, standing along shore. I saw a part of the animal or fish ten or fifteen feet from the head downwards including the head; the head appeared to be size of ten-gallon keg, and six inches above the surface of the water. It was of a dark colour. I saw no tongue, but heard William Somerby and Robert Bragg, my two men, who were with me, call out, "look at his tongue." The motion of his head was sideways and quite moderate; the motion of the body, up and down. I have seen whales very often; his

motion was much more rapid than whales, or any other fish I have ever seen ; he left a very long wake behind him ; he did not appear to alter his course in consequence of being so near the vessel. I saw him much less time than either of the others, and not in so favourable a position to notice his head.

I have been to sea many years, and never saw any fish that had the least resemblance to this animal. Judging from what I saw out of water, I should judge the body was about the size of a half barrel in circumference.

SEWELL TOPPAN.

Suffolk ss. Boston, September 1, 1817. Personally appeared Capt. Sewell Toppan, and made solemn oath, that the foregoing declaration, by him subscribed, is true.

Before me, Jos. MAY, Jus. Pacis.

XII.

ROBERT BRAGG, of Newburyport, mariner, of the schooner *Laura* of Newburyport, Sewell Toppan master, testifies : That on Thursday last, about ten o'clock A. M. coming in said schooner, bound from Newburyport to Boston, off Eastern point, (Cape Ann) about a mile and a half from the shore, I being on deck, the vessel being becalmed, looking at the windward, I saw something break the water, and coming very fast towards us ; I mentioned it to the man at helm, William Somerby ; the animal came about 28 or 30 feet from us, between the vessel and the shore, and passed very swiftly by us ; he left a very long wake behind him. About six inches in height of his body and head were out of water, and as I should judge about 14 or 15 feet in length. He had a head like a serpent, rather larger than his body and rather blunt ; did not see his eyes ; when astern of the vessel about 30 feet, he threw out his tongue about two feet in length ; the end of it appeared to me to resemble a fisherman's harpoon ; he raised his tongue several times perpendicularly, or nearly so, and let it fall again. He was in sight about ten minutes. I think he moved

at the rate of 12 or 14 miles an hour ; he was of a dark chocolate colour, and from what appeared out of water I should suppose he was about two and a half feet in circumference ; he made no noise ; his back and body appeared smooth ; a small bunch on each side of his head, just above his eyes ; he did not appear to be at all disturbed by the vessel ; his course was in the direction for the Salt Islands ; his motion was much swifter than any whale that I have ever seen, and I have seen many—did not observe any teeth ; his motion was very steady, a little up and down.

To this account I am willing to make oath

ROBERT BRAGG.



XIII.

I, WILLIAM SOMERBY of the schooner *Laura*, testify and say : That on Thursday last about 10 o'clock, A. M. as I was coming in said schooner from Newburyport, bound to Boston, off Brace's cove, a little eastward of Eastern point, (Cape Ann) about two miles from land, the sea calm, I was at helm. Robert Bragg, one of the crew, asked me if that was not the snake coming, pointing out a break in the water, south of us ; a strange animal of the serpent form passed very swiftly by us—the nearest distance I should judge to be between 30 and 40 feet—the upper part of his back and head was above water—the length that appeared was about 12 or 15 feet, his head was like a serpent's, tapering off to a point. He threw out his tongue a number of times, extended about two feet from his jaws—the end of it resembled a harpoon—he threw his tongue backwards several times over his head, and let it fall again—I saw one of his eyes as he passed ; it appeared very bright, and about the size of the eye of an ox. The colour of all that appeared was very dark, almost black. He did not appear to take any notice of the vessel, and made no noise. There appeared a bunch above the eye—Should judge him to be about two and a half feet in circumference. Have often seen whales at sea. The motion of this animal was much swifter than that of any whale. The motion of the body was rising and

falling as he advanced, the head moderately vibrating from side to side. The colour of his tongue was a light brown.

To this account I am willing to make oath.

WILLIAM SOMERBY.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, August 30, 1817. Then appeared Robert Bragg and William Somerby, and made oath to the truth of the above declarations, by them respectively subscribed.

Before me, Jos. MAY, Jus. Pacis.

XIV.

Boston, September 2, 1817.

SIR,

YOUR letter of the 28th ult. to the Committee of the Linnæan Society, and the accompanying depositions, were duly received, and were yesterday communicated to the Society. The committee are greatly obliged to you for your ready compliance with their request. In these sentiments the Society unite, and I am charged with the agreeable office of communicating to you their vote of thanks for your very acceptable labours. What you have thus accomplished will go far in giving some precise and accurate conceptions on a subject, peculiarly exposed to exaggeration and mistake. This evidence, with some additional documents, will probably be published. The Committee will not make their final report on the subject of their commission until evidence shall be procured respecting some other reputed appearances of like description, particularly one at Plymouth in 1815.

We have been informed that the animal at Gloucester was once seen, and it was said by a woman, lying dormant very near the shore. The Committee wished this intimation to be given to you, that if it should point to any material circumstances, the evidence might be taken.

The last we hear of the object of our inquiry is of his appearance off Eastern point on the 28th ult. This we gather from

the testimony of Capt. Toppan, and his crew, of the schooner *Laura*, coming from Newburyport to Boston.

It appears by your letter, that you had sight of the animal. A letter from you, giving a detailed account of your observations, would be particularly acceptable

We understand that a gentleman in Gloucester, (Capt Beach,) has a drawing, supposed to be a pretty good representation of the animal. Some information respecting this drawing would be agreeable ; how far it is considered by those who had the best view of the animal as a correct representation, and whether the person possessing it would be disposed to permit an engraving from it to be annexed to the publication of the evidence, and on what terms.

Yours very respectfully,

JNO. DAVIS.

XV.

Gloucester, September 9, 1817.

SIR,

YOUR favour of the second inst. has been received. The vote of thanks of the Linnæan Society for my services was highly gratifying to me, not simply on account of the high consideration I entertain for the members of that laudable institution ; but likewise for the agreeable manner, and respectable channel, through which their vote of thanks was communicated to me.

I have seen and conversed with the woman, who was said to have seen the serpent dormant on the rocks, near the water, to whom you refer in yours ; but she can give no material evidence. She says that she saw something, resembling a large log of wood, on the rocks, on the extreme eastern point of Ten Pound island, (a small island in our harbour,) resting partly on the rocks, and partly in the water. The distance was about half a mile. She took a glass, looked at the object, and saw it move. Her attention was for a short time arrested, by some domestic avocation, and when she looked for the object again, it had disappeared.

You request a detailed account of my observations, relative to the serpent. I saw him on the fourteenth ultimo, and when nearest, I judged him to be about two hundred and fifty yards from me. At that distance I judged him (in the largest part) about the size of a half barrel, gradually tapering towards the two extremes. Twice I saw him with a glass, only for a short time, and at other times, with the naked eye, for nearly half an hour. His colour appeared nearly black—his motion was vertical. When he moved on the surface of the water, the track in his rear was visible, for at least half a mile.

His velocity, when moving on the surface of the water, I judged was at the rate of a mile in about four minutes. When immersed in the water, his speed was greater, moving, I should say, at the rate of a mile in two or at most three minutes. When moving under water, you could often trace him by the motion of the water, on the surface, and from this circumstance I conclude he did not swim deep. He apparently went as straight through the water, as you could draw a line. When he changed his course, it diminished his velocity but little—the two extremes that were visible appeared rapidly moving in opposite directions, and when they came parallel, they appeared not more than a yard apart. With a glass, I could not take in, at one view, the two extremes of the animal, that were visible. I have looked at a vessel at about the same distance, and could distinctly see forty five feet. If he should be taken, I have no doubt that his length will be found seventy feet, at least, and I should not be surprised, if he should be found one hundred feet long. When I saw him I was standing on an eminence, on the sea shore, elevated about thirty feet above the surface of the water, and the sea was smooth.

If I saw his head, I could not distinguish it from his body ; though there were seafaring men near me, who said that they could distinctly see his head. I believe they spoke truth ; but not having been much accustomed to look through a glass, I was not so fortunate.

I never saw more than seven or eight distinct portions of him above the water, at any one time, and he appeared rough ;

though I supposed this appearance was produced by his motion. When he disappeared, he apparently sunk directly down like a rock.

Capt. Beach has been in Boston for a week past, and I am informed that he is still there. An engraving from his drawing of the serpent has been, or is now, making in Boston ; but I have not been able to ascertain how far his drawing is thought a correct representation.

Respectfully, Sir,

your most ob't,

LONSON NASH.

HON. JOHN DAVIS.



XVI.

Boston, September 1, 1817.

SIR,

AT a meeting of the Linnæan Society, on the 18th ultimo, the subscribers were appointed a Committee for the purpose of collecting any evidence which may exist respecting a remarkable animal, denominated a *Sea Serpent*, reported to have been recently seen in and near the harbour of Gloucester. The Committee have procured evidence from Gloucester, which they are prepared to report to the Society, and this evidence is of such a character, that they have thought it expedient to extend their inquiry to other reported appearances of a similar nature on our coasts. An appearance of this sort is mentioned as having been noticed by some persons at Plymouth two or three years since. We would ask your assistance in procuring the evidence on this subject.

Your connexion with the Society seems to authorize the request for your assistance in having the evidence on this subject, which may exist at Plymouth, properly taken and transmitted ; but separately from any such claim, we know your habitual readiness to aid in any investigation in natural science. This subject is now of general interest among us, and will probably be so abroad. Any co-operation which you may wish from magis-

trates and intelligent gentlemen at Plymouth, we doubt not will be readily afforded you. We shall suspend our final report to the Society, until your communication shall be received.

Yours respectfully and
with esteem,

JOHN DAVIS,
JACOB BIGELOW,
FRANCIS C. GRAY, } *Commit-*
tee.

Mr. SAMUEL DAVIS, *Plymouth.*

XVII.

Plymouth, Oct. 2, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

INCLOSED is the deposition duly authenticated of Capt. E. Finney of this town, descriptive of an unusual animal, which was seen by him in the outer harbour of Plymouth, in June 1815. Capt Finney lives a few miles from town, and is much engaged in business, which must apologize for the delay that has followed, since the receipt of your letter of the first of September. His deposition is impartial and unbiassed—and agrees uniformly with his first declarations in 1815—besides he has not read, whatever he may have heard, of the Cape Ann descriptions; he has been from his youth accustomed to a seafaring life—in the fishing employ, and in foreign voyages—has frequently seen whales, and almost every species of fish.

The drawing on the other page (made by me) I have shewn to Capt. Finney, who says it illustrates his conceptions on the subject exactly. All your questions were asked him, and when his replies are negative, such as gills, breathing holes, &c. &c. it must not be inferred that such things were not displayed—but only that he did not see them, &c. Certain house carpenters, who were at work on a building near the spot, also saw it; as well as many others—these persons dwell with emphasis on the long and distinct *wake* made in the water by the passage of the fish.—As

to the point of time, it must have been from known data between the 18th and 25th of June. And I would remark, that this is exactly the season when the first setting in of mackerel occurs in our bay.

Yours respectfully,

S. DAVIS.

Hon. J. DAVIS,	} Committee of the Lin-
Dr. J. BIGELOW,	
Mr. F. C. GRAY,	

nean Society.

XVIII.

I, ELKANAH FINNEY of Plymouth, in the County of Plymouth, Mariner, testify and say : That about the twentieth of June A. D. 1815, being at work near my house, which is situated near the sea shore in Plymouth, at a place called Warren's cove, where the beach joins the main land ; my son, a boy, came from the shore and informed me of an unusual appearance on the surface of the sea in the cove. I paid little attention to his story at first ; but as he persisted in saying that he had seen something very remarkable, I looked towards the cove, where I saw something which appeared to the naked eye to be drift sea weed. I then viewed it through a perspective glass, and was in a moment satisfied that it was some aquatic animal, with the form, motion and appearance of which I had hitherto been unacquainted. It was about a quarter of a mile from the shore, and was moving with great rapidity to the northward. It then appeared to be about thirty feet in length ; the animal went about half a mile to the northward ; then turned about, and while turning, displayed a greater length than I had before seen ; I supposed at least an hundred feet. It then came towards me, in a southerly direction, very rapidly, until he was in a line with me, when he stopped, and lay entirely still on the surface of the water. I then had a good view of him through my glass, at the distance of a quarter of a mile. His appearance in this situation was like a string of buoys. I saw perhaps thirty or forty of these protu-

berances or bunches, which were about the size of a barrel. The head appeared to be about six or eight feet long, and where it was connected with the body was a little larger than the body. His head tapered off to the size of a horse's head. I could not discern any mouth. But what I supposed to be his under jaw had a white stripe extending the whole length of the head, just above the water. While he lay in this situation, he appeared to be about a hundred or a hundred and twenty feet long. The body appeared to be of a uniform size. I saw no part of the animal which I supposed to be a tail. I therefore thought he did not discover to me his whole length. His colour was a deep brown or black. I could not discover any eyes, mane, gills, or breathing holes. I did not see any fins or legs. The animal did not utter any sound, and it did not appear to notice any thing. It remained still and motionless for five minutes or more. The wind was light with a clear sky, and the water quite smooth. He then moved to the southward; but not with so rapid a motion as I had observed before. He was soon out of my sight. The next morning I rose very early to discover him. There was a fresh breeze from the south, which subsided about eight o'clock. It then became quite calm, when I again saw the animal about a mile to the northward of my house, down the beach. He did not display so great a length as the night before, perhaps not more than twenty or thirty feet. He often disappeared, and was gone five or ten minutes under water. I thought he was diving or fishing for his food. He remained in nearly the same situation, and thus employed, for two hours. I then saw him moving off, in a northeast direction, towards the light house. I could not determine whether its motion was up and down, or to the right and left. His quickest motion was very rapid; I should suppose at the rate of fifteen or twenty miles an hour. Mackerel, manhaden, herring, and other bait fish abound in the cove, where the animal was seen.

ELKANAH FINNEY.

Plymouth ss. October 2, 1817. The above named Elkanah Finney appeared and made oath to the truth of the foregoing statement, by him subscribed, before me,

NATHANIEL M. DAVIS, Jus. Peace.

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XIX.

Bath, September 17, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

SUPPOSING the interests of natural science may be promoted, and some light thrown on a subject, which receives, as it deserves, much attention ; and understanding lately from Dr. Vaughan of Hallowell, and Mr. Professor Farrar of Cambridge. that the Linnæan Society is prosecuting researches respecting it, I make no other apology for communicating to you the following statements in reference to the Sea Serpent of our coasts.

They consist of extracts from some MS. Notes on the District of Maine, which I have been in the habit of making ever since I have resided in the country, and I shall transcribe literally, in order to communicate with greater accuracy.

"June 28th, 1809. The Rev. Mr. Abraham Cummings," who has been much employed in Missions in the District of Maine, and navigated his own boat among the islands, &c. in the discharge of his duty, "informs me," in conversation, which was immediately written from his lips, "that in Penobscot bay has been occasionally seen within these thirty years, a Sea Serpent, supposed to be about sixty feet in length, and of the size of a sloop's mast. Rev. Mr. Cummings saw him, in company with his wife and daughter, and a young lady of Belfast, Martha Spring ; and judged he was about three times the length of his boat, which is twenty three feet. When he was seen this time he appeared not to notice the boat, though he was distant, as nearly as could be ascertained, but about fifteen rods. Mr. Cummings observes, that the British saw him in their expedition to Bagaduse ; that the inhabitants of Fox and Long islands have seen such an animal, and that a Mr. Crocket saw two of them together about twenty two

years since. When he was seen by the inhabitants of Fox island, two persons were together at both times. People also of Mount Desert have seen the monster. One of those which were seen by Mr. Crocket was smaller than that seen by Mr. Cummings, and their motion in the sea appeared to a perpendicular winding, and not horizontal. The British supposed the length of that, which they saw, to be three hundred feet, but this Mr. Cummings imagines to be an exaggeration. A gentleman of intelligence (Rev. Alden Bradford of Wiscasset, now Secretary of the Commonwealth,) inquired of Mr. Cummings whether the appearance might not be produced by a number of porpoises following each other in a train; but Mr. Cummings asserts, that the animal held his head out of water about five feet till he got out to sea; for when seen he was going out of the bay, and Mr. Cummings was ascending it. The colour was a bluish green about the head and neck, but the water rippled so much over his body that it was not possible to determine its tint. The shape of the head was like that of a common snake, flattened, and about the size of a pail. He was seen approaching, passing, and departing. Till this, Mr. Cummings was as incredulous in respect to its existence, as many of his neighbours. The weather was calm, and it was the month of August, in which month, Mr. Cummings remarks, that, as far as he has heard, the serpent makes his appearance on the coast."

I am inclined to suppose that Mr. Cummings' account is that, which in one of the public papers was lately alluded to, as having been communicated to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, but mislaid.

"Aug. 23, 1809. Mr. Charles Shaw, (then of Bath, now an attorney in Boston,) informed me, that a Capt. Lillis, with whom he had sailed, observed cursorily in conversation, that he had seen off the coast a very singular fish; it appeared, said he, more like a snake than a fish, and was about forty feet long. It held its head erect, had no mane, and looked like an ordinary serpent. He asked Mr Shaw if he had ever seen, or read, or heard of such an animal."

About two years after hearing this, while on a journey to Indian Old town, as one of the Massachusetts Commissioners to induce the Indians to cultivate their lands, I had opportunity to make further inquiry, and find in my journal the following entry.

“Sept. 10, 1811. Have heard to-day further testimony respecting the Sea Serpent of the Penobscot. A Mr. Staples of Prospect, of whom I inquired as I passed, was told by a Mr. Miller, of one of the islands of the bay, that he had seen it; and ‘it was as big as a sloop’s boom, and about sixty or seventy feet long’ He told me also that about 1780, as a schooner was lying at the mouth of the river, or in the bay, one of these enormous creatures leaped over it between the masts—that the men ran into the hold for fright, and that the weight of the serpent sunk the vessel ‘one streak,’ or plank. The schooner was of about eighteen tons.”

These extracts I put into your hands, dear sir, without any comment. If they shall tend to increase the evidence of facts, on which the Linnæan Society is seeking information, you will make of them what use is deemed expedient. It is, however, proper to suggest, that the Rev. Mr. Cummings can probably furnish more testimony on the subject, although I attempted to elicit from him what he possessed. He is now, I believe, on mission, (with a boat obtained in this town,) at the Grand Menan, or in its vicinity.

With great respect,

Your, and the Society’s obed’t servant,

WILLIAM JENKS.

Hon’ble JUDGE DAVIS,

President of the Linnæan Society.

XX.

THE account given by Pontoppidan of the Sea Snake said to have been often seen near the coast of Norway, agrees in so many particulars with the preceding depositions and statements, that your Committee think proper to lay it before you, as affording additional evidence of the existence of the animal, described in

them ; since they display coincidences with that account apparently too close and numerous to be attributed to mere accident, and beyond any reasonable suspicion of design. The work of Pontoppidan is hardly known in this country, and the extracts from it in the Cyclopedia of Dr. Rees, and in Guthrie's Geography, state but few of the peculiarities, in which this coincidence is observed ; and mingle with these few, several traits ascribed by Pontoppidan to a different animal, none of which agree with any statement in our depositions.

Extracts from the Natural History of Norway, by Pontoppidan, Bishop of Bergen, translated from the Danish. London, 1755. Part 2. From p. 196 to p. 207.

“ This creature, particularly in the North Sea, continually keeps himself at the bottom of the sea, excepting in the months of July and August, which is their spawning time ; and then they come to the surface in calm weather, but plunge into the water again, so soon as the wind raises the least wave.”——“ I have questioned its existence myself till that suspicion was removed by full and sufficient evidence from credible and experienced fishermen and sailors in Norway ; of which there are hundreds, who can testify that they have annually seen them. All these persons agree very well in the general description.”

“ In all my inquiry about these affairs, I have hardly spoke with any intelligent person, born in the Manor of Nordland, who was not able to give a pertinent answer, and strong assurances of the existence of this fish : and some of our north traders, that come here every year with their merchandize, think it a very strange question, when they are seriously asked whether there be any such creature ; they think it as ridiculous as if the question was put to them whether there be such fish as eel or cod.”

The author then records a letter from the honourable Lawrence de Ferry, Captain in the Navy ; which is as follows :

“ MR. JOHN REUTZ.

“ The latter end of August, in the year 1746, as I was on a voyage, in my return from Trundheim, in a very calm and hot

day, having a mind to put in at Molde, it happened that when we were arrived with my vessel within six English miles of the aforesaid Molde, being at a place called Jule-Næss, as I was reading in a book, I heard a kind of murmuring voice from amongst the men at the oars, who were eight in number, and observed that the man at the helm kept off from the land. Upon this I inquired what was the matter, and was informed that there was a Sea Snake before us. I then ordered the man at the helm to keep to the land again, and to come up with this creature, of which I had heard so many stories. Though the fellows were under some apprehensions, they were obliged to obey my orders. In the mean time this Sea Snake passed by us, and we were obliged to tack the vessel about in order to get nearer to it. As the snake swam faster than we could row, I took my gun, that was ready charged, and fired at it: on this he immediately plunged under the water. We rowed to the place where it sunk down, which in the calm might easily be observed, and lay upon our oars, thinking it would come up again to the surface; however it did not. When the Snake plunged down, the water appeared thick and red; perhaps some of the shot might wound it, the distance being very little. The head of this Snake, which it held more than two feet above the surface of the water, resembled that of a horse. It was of a greyish colour, and the mouth was quite black and very large. It had black eyes and a long white mane that hung down from the neck to the surface of the water.* Besides the head and neck, we saw seven or eight folds or coils of this Snake, which were very thick, and as far as we could guess, there was about a fathom distance between each fold. I related this affair in a certain company where there was a person of distinction present, who desired that I would communicate to him an authentic detail of all that happened; and for this reason two of my sailors, who were present at the same

* This statement is not absolute proof that the animal here described was different from that seen near Gloucester. For when the head was elevated above the water, the white colour of the neck, or the spray of the sea, might possibly have been mistaken for a mane.