

## CHAPTER VIII.

Pretended Fossil Sea Serpent, or Zeuglodon, from Alabama.—Recent Appearance of a Sea Serpent in Gulf of St. Lawrence.—In Norway, in 1845.—Near Cape Ann, Massachusetts, 1817.—American Descriptions.—Conjectures as to Nature of the Animal.—Sea Snake stranded in the Orkneys proved to be a Shark.—Dr. Barclay's Memoir.—Sir Everard Home's Opinion.—Sea Serpent of Hebrides, 1808.—Reasons for concluding that Pontopiddan's Sea Snake was a basking Shark.—Capt. M'Quhae's Sea Serpent.

DURING the first part of my stay in Boston, October, 1845, we one day saw the walls in the principal streets covered with placards, in which the words SEA SERPENT ALIVE figured conspicuously. On approaching near enough to read the smaller type of this advertisement, I found that Mr. Koch was about to exhibit to the Bostonians the fossil skeleton of "that colossal and terrible reptile the *sea serpent*, which, *when alive*, measured thirty feet in circumference." The public were also informed that this hydrarchos, or water king, was the leviathan of the Book of Job, chapter xli. I shall have occasion in the sequel, when describing my expedition in Alabama to the exact site from whence these fossil remains were disinterred by Mr. Koch, of showing that they belong to the zeuglodon, first made out by Mr. Owen to be an extinct cetacean of truly vast dimensions, and which I ascertained to be referable geologically to the Eocene period.

In the opinion of the best comparative anatomists, there is no reason to believe that this fossil whale bore any resemblance in form, when alive, to a snake, although the bones of the vertebral column, having been made to form a continuous series, more than 100 feet in length, by the union of vertebræ derived from more than one individual, were ingeniously arranged by Mr. Koch in a serpentine form, so as to convey the impression that motion was produced by vertical flexures of the body.

At the very time when I had every day to give an answer to