

most of the contradictions of those who have attempted to describe what they saw of the color, form, and motion of the animal. At each of these periods the creature was seen by some persons who were on the shore, and who could take a leisurely survey of it, without their imaginations being disturbed by apprehensions of personal danger. On the other hand, the consternation of the fishermen in Norway, the Hebrides, and America, who have encountered this monster, is such, that we are entitled to ask the question—Is it possible they can have seen nothing more than an ordinary whale or shark, or a shoal of porpoises, or some other known cetacean or fish?

So great a sensation was created by the appearance of a huge animal, in August, 1817, and for several successive years in the harbor of Gloucester, Massachusetts, near Cape Ann, that the Linnæan Society of Boston appointed a committee to collect evidence on the subject. I am well acquainted with two of the three gentlemen, Dr. Bigelow and Mr. F. C. Gray, who drew up the report, which gives in detail the depositions of numerous witnesses who saw the creature on shore or at sea, some of them from a distance of only ten yards. "The monster," they say, "was from eighty to ninety feet long, his head usually carried about two feet above water; of a dark brown color; the body with thirty or more protuberances, compared by some to four-gallon kegs, by others to a string of buoys, and called by several persons bunches on the back; motion very rapid, faster than those of a whale, swimming a mile in three minutes, and sometimes more, leaving a wake behind him; chasing mackerel, herrings, and other fish, which were seen jumping out of the water, fifty at a time, as he approached. He only came to the surface of the sea in calm and bright weather. A skillful gunner fired at him from a boat, and, having taken good aim, felt sure he must have hit him on the head; the creature turned toward him, then dived under the boat, and reappeared a hundred yards on the other side."

Just as they were concluding their report, an unlucky accident raised a laugh at the expense of the Linnæan Committee, and enabled the incredulous to turn the whole matter into ridicule.