

as to resemble a string of floating barrels in motion. He said that after this explanation had been suggested to him, he was one of thirty persons who ran along the beach at Nahant, near Boston, when the sea serpent was swimming very near the shore. They were all convinced that it was one animal, and they saw it raise its head out of the water. He added that there were at that time two sea serpents fishing in the Bay at once.

Among many American narratives of this phenomenon which have been communicated to me, I shall select one given me by my friend Mr. William M'Ilvaine of Philadelphia, because it seems to attest the fact of the creature having wandered as far south as Cape Hatteras, in North Carolina, lat. 35°. "Captain Johnson, of New Jersey, was sailing, in the year 1806, from the West Indies, on the inner edge of the gulf stream, in a deeply laden brig, when they were becalmed, and the crew and passengers awe-struck by the sudden apparition of a creature having a cylindrical body of great length, and which lifted up its head eight feet above the water. After gazing at them for several minutes it retreated, making large undulations like a snake." The story had been so much discredited that the captain would only relate it to intimate friends.

After the year 1817, every marvelous tale was called in the United States a snake story; and when Colonel Perkins went to Washington twenty years ago, and was asked if he had ever known a person who had seen the sea serpent, he answered that he was one of the unfortunate individuals who saw it himself. I confess that when I left America in 1846, I was in a still more unfortunate predicament, for I believed in the sea serpent without having seen it. Not that I ever imagined the northern seas to be now inhabited by a gigantic ophidian, for this hypothesis has always seemed to me in the highest degree improbable, seeing that, in the present state of the globe, there is no great development of reptile life in temperate or polar regions, whether in the northern or southern hemisphere. When we enter high latitudes, such as those in which the creature called a sea serpent most frequently occurs, we find even the smaller reptilians, such as frogs and newts, to grow rare or disappear; and there are no