

of the Hebrides were terrified by a monster of huge size and unusual appearance, which created a great sensation in Scotland. Three or four months after this apparition, the body of an enormous sea monster was washed ashore (Sept. 1808) on the outer reefs at Rothesholm Head in Stronsa, one of the Orkneys, where it was first observed while still entire, and its length measured by two persons; after which, when somewhat decayed, it was swept in by another storm, and stranded on the beach, and there examined by others. Mr. Neill, well known as a naturalist, who had been on a visit to Stronsa the same year, but had left before this occurrence, immediately corresponded with friends on the spot, among others with Mr. Laing, the historian, and with a lawyer and physician, who collected evidence for him. Their affidavits, taken in 1808, respecting the monster, were published in the Transactions of the Wernerian Society, of which Mr. Neill was secretary, and were accompanied by a drawing of the skeleton, obviously ideal and very incorrect, with six legs and a long tail curving several times vertically. The man who sketched it reached the spot too late, and when scarcely any part of the animal remained entire, and the outline is admitted to have been taken by him and altered from a figure chalked out upon a table by another man who had seen it, while one witness denied its resemblance to what he had seen. But a carpenter, whose veracity, I am informed by Mr. Neill (in a letter dated 1848), may be trusted, had measured the carcass, when still whole, with his foot-rule, and found it to be fifty-five long, while a person who also measured it when entire, said it was nine fathoms long. The bristles of the mane, each fourteen inches in length, and described as having been luminous in the dark, were no doubt portions of a dorsal fin in a state of decomposition. One said that this mane extended from the shoulders to within two feet and a half of the tail, another that it reached to the tail: a variance which may entitle us to call in question the alleged continuity of the mane down the whole back. So strong was the propensity in Scotland to believe that the Stronsa animal was the sea serpent of the Norwegians, that Mr. Neill himself, after drawing up for the Wernerian Society his description of it from the