

different accounts communicated to him, called it *Halsydrus Pontoppidani*.

Parts of the cranium, scapular arch, fin, and vertebral column were sent to Dr. Barclay of Edinburgh, who had at that time the finest museum of comparative anatomy north of the Tweed, and he conceived them to belong to a new and entirely unknown monster.

If the imagination of good zoologists could be so preoccupied as to cause them at once to jump to the conclusion that the Stronsa animal and the Norwegian sea serpent were one and the same, we can not be surprised that the public in general placed the most implicit faith in that idea. That they did so, is proved by a passage recently published in Beattie's *Life of Campbell*, where the poet writes thus, in a letter dated February 13th, 1809 :—

“ Of real life let me see what I have heard for the last fortnight : first, a snake—my friend Telford received a drawing of it—has been found thrown on the Orkney Isles ; a sea snake with a mane like a horse, four feet thick, and fifty-five feet long. This is seriously true. Malcolm Laing, the historian, saw it, and sent a drawing of it to my friend.”*

Now here we see the great inaccuracy of what may be styled contemporaneous testimony of a highly educated man, who had no motive or disposition to misrepresent facts. From the *Wernerian Transactions* and Mr. Neill's letter, I learn distinctly that Malcolm Laing never went to the shore of Stronsa to see the monster.

Fortunately, several of the vertebræ were forwarded, in 1809, to Sir Everard Home, in London, who at once pronounced them to belong to the *Squalus maximus*, or common basking shark. Figures of other portions sent to Edinburgh to Dr. Barclay, were also published by him in the *Wernerian Transactions*, and agree very well with Home's decision, although it is clear, from Barclay's *Memoir*, that he was very angry with the English anatomist for setting him right, and declaring it to be a shark. It was indeed very difficult to believe on any but the most con-

* *Campbell's Life*, vol. ii. p. 169, 170.