

vincing evidence that a carcass which was fifty-five feet long could be referable to a species, the largest known individual of which has never exceeded thirty-five or forty feet. But there seems no escape from Home's verdict; for the vertebræ are still in the College of Surgeons, where I have seen them, quite entire, and so identical with those of the *Squalus maximus*, that Mr. Owen is unwilling to imagine they can belong to any other species of the same genus.

Mr. Neill tells me, in his letter, that the basking shark is by no means uncommon in the Orkneys, where it is called the hockmar, and a large one was killed in Stromness Harbor in 1804, when he was there; yet it was agreed by all with whom he spoke in 1808, that the Stronsa animal was double the length of the largest hockmar ever stranded in their times in Orkney.

Unfortunately, no one observed the habits and motions of the monster before it was cast ashore; but the Rev. Donald Maclean, of Small Isles in the Hebrides, was requested to draw up a statement of what he recollected of the creature which had so much alarmed the fishermen in the summer of the same year. Before he penned his letter, which was printed as an appendix to Barclay's Memoir in 1809,* he had clearly been questioned by persons who were under the full persuasion that what he had seen, and the Stronsa animal, were identical with Pontoppidan's sea serpent. Maclean informs us, that it was about the month of June, 1808, when the huge creature in question, which looked at a distance like a small rock in the sea, gave chase to his boat, and he saw it first from the boat, and afterward from the land.

Its head was broad, of a form somewhat oval; its neck rather smaller. It moved by undulations up and down. When the head was above water, its motion was not so quick; when most elevated, it appeared to take a view of distant objects. It directed its "monstrous head," which still continued above water, toward the boat, and then plunged violently under water in pursuit of them. Afterward, when he saw it from the shore, "it moved off with its head above water for about half a mile

* Wern. Trans. vol. i. p. 444.