

before he lost sight of it. Its length he believed to be from seventy to eighty feet." "About the same time the crews of thirteen fishing boats, off the island of Canna, were terrified by this monster; and the crew of one boat saw it coming toward them, between Rum and Canna, with its head high above water."*

Mr. Maclean adds, evidently in answer to a question put by his correspondent, that he saw nothing of the mane; and adds, "when nearest to me it did not raise its head wholly above water, so that the neck being under water, I could perceive no shining filaments thereon, if it had any." And he also observes: "It had no fin that I could perceive, and seemed to me to move progressively by undulations up and down." Most of my readers are probably satisfied by this time, that if nothing had come down to us but oral testimony, or even published accounts without figures respecting the creature seen in the Hebrides in 1808, as well as that afterward stranded in Orkney, we should all of us have felt sure that both of them were one and the same monster, and no other than the sea snake of Pontoppidan, or that so often seen on the eastern coast of North America. How much delusion in this case has been dispelled by the preservation of a few bones! May we not then presume that other sea serpents were also sharks? If so, how are we to reconcile recorded appearances with this hypothesis? It was justly remarked by Dr. Fleming, in his *British Animals*, 1828 (p. 174), that Maclean's account of a creature, which raised its head above the water and viewed distant objects, was opposed to the idea of its being referable to the class of cartilaginous fishes, for no shark lifts its head out of the sea as it swims. I may also remark, that the descriptions commonly given, both by the Norwegians and North Americans, would agree better with the appearance of a large seal with a mane, chased by a shoal of porpoises, than with a shark.

But when we question the evidence more closely, we must make great allowance for the incompetence of observers wholly ignorant of zoology. In the first place, we must dismiss from our minds the image of a shark as it appears when out of the

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