

when swimming yields a light which looks like the reflection of the *moon* in the water, whence it has also been called the moon-fish—and the spectator in vain searches for that planet in the heavens. Sometimes many individuals swim together, and by their multiplied luminous disks, generally at some distance, compose a singular and startling spectacle; and if we take into consideration the magnitude of these animals,* we may conceive the wonder and amazement that would agitate the mind of any one when he first beheld such an army of great lights moving through the waters. For what purpose Providence has gifted the sun-fish with this property, and how it is produced, has not been ascertained. It may either be for defence or illumination.

Few animals, with regard to magnitude, present to the eye such enormous masses as some fishes; leaving the *whales* out of the question, which, though aquatic, belong to another Class, what quadruped can compete with the *shark*, which is also a phosphoric fish. That tribe called by the French *Requins*,† which is thought to be synonymous with the *Carcharias* of the Greeks, and one of which was probably the sea-monster, mistranslated the *whale*, which swallowed the disobedient prophet—are stated to exceed thirty feet in length; another‡ of a different tribe is still larger, sometimes extending to the enormous length of more than *forty* feet!!§ Next to the sharks, the *rays*, nearly akin to them, exceed in their magnitude; they are sometimes called sea-eagles, because in their rage and fury they occasionally elevate themselves from the water, and fall again with such force as to make the sea foam and thunder. An individual of a species|| of this tribe, called

* Hist. of Waterford, 271. Borlase, Cornw. 267.

† *Carcharias*. Cuv.

‡ *Squalus maximus*.

§ N. D. D'H. N. xxix. 192. xxxii. 74.

|| *Raia Banksiana*.