

fully twice the size of the other, and contains about thrice as many teeth. That bilateral symmetry of the skeleton which is so *invariable* a characteristic of the vertebrata, that ordinary observers, who have eyes for only the rare and the uncommon, fail to remark it, but which a Newton could regard as so wonderful, and so thoroughly in harmony with the uniformity of the planetary system, has scarce any place in the asymmetrical head of the flounder. There exists in some of our north country fishing villages an ancient apologue, which, though not remarkable for point or meaning, at least serves to show that this peculiar example of distortion the rude fishermen of a former age were observant enough to detect. Once on a time the fishes met, it is said, to elect a king; and their choice fell on the herring. "The herring king!" contemptuously exclaimed the flounder, a fish of consummate vanity, and greatly piqued on this occasion that its own presumed claims should have been overlooked; "where, then, am I?" And straightway, in punishment of its conceit and rebellion, "its eyes turned to the back of its head." Here is there a story palpably founded on the degradation of misplacement and distortion, which originated ages ere the naturalist had recognized either the term or the principle.

It would be an easy matter for an ingenious theorist, not much disposed to distinguish between the minor and the master laws of organized being, to get up quite as unexceptionable a theory of degradation as of development. The one-eyed, one-legged Chelsea pensioner, who had a child, unborn at the time, laid to his charge, agreed to recognize his relationship to the little creature, if, on its coming into the world, it was found to have a green patch over its eye, and a wooden leg. And, in order to construct a hypothesis of progressive degradation, the theorist has but to take for