

IS :: THE :: SEA :: SERPENT :: A :: MYTH ?

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Is there a sea serpent? To this question scientific men would unanimously answer No. But if not a veritable scaly snake, may there not be some gigantic creature whose occasional appearance gives rise to reports that the sea serpent has been met with? While the majority of scientific men would also say to this question, now and then one might be found who would admit that this is possible in spite of the fact that no naturalist has ever set eyes upon the animal.

It is true that the sea serpent has an aggravating way of keeping out of sight of those who are most desirous of making his acquaintance, and neither bone, tooth, nor scale of the monster has ever fallen under the eye of a scientific observer. But while this is very much to his discredit, it is a habit shared by other animals, and need not necessarily imply that he has no existence. It is not so long ago that whaler's stories of giant squids were generally disbelieved, and not until or two moderate sized specimens were taken on the coast of Newfoundland was their authenticity considered as definitely established.

There is certainly a very considerable amount of testimony to the occurrence of some huge, snake-like creature, sufficient, as Professor Wilson notes, to establish an ordinary fact in a court of law. How abundant is this testimony, and how well entitled to credence, the reader may easily ascertain by referring to *The Strand* for August, 1895, where it is published in considerable detail. It will not do to say that all these statements are based on a misinterpretation of some familiar thing—a whale, a school of porpoises, a flock of birds, or drifting kelp—for the average ship's officer is well acquainted with such objects. Moreover, neither flocks of birds nor kelp occur in some of the places named, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that some animal was seen with which the observer was quite unfamiliar.

Oldemann, a Dutch naturalist, was so impressed with the belief that such an amount of testimony must rest on a firm foundation of fact that he wrote a book to show that the animal seen was an enormous seal-like creature of primitive type, which now and again came within the ken of seafaring men. That such a creature should be so seldom seen is not surprising. One may be on the ocean for weeks without catching a glimpse of a seal, and if a ship with towering masts and spreading canvas escapes notice it is small wonder that an animal which rarely puts its nose above water should not be more generally known.

Says Professor Andrew Wilson: "Many of the tales of sea serpents are amply verified when judged by the ordinary rules of evidence, and . . . certain gigantic marine animals, at present unfamiliar or unknown to science, do certainly exist." And the late Dr. G. Brown Goode wrote in the introduction to "Ocean Ichthyology": "It can not be doubted that somewhere in the sea, at an unknown depth below the surface, there are living certain fish-like animals, unknown to science, and of great size, which come occasionally to the surface and give foundation to such stories as those of the sea serpent."

The hypothesis most commonly accepted, and one that fits admirably with many descriptions of the sea serpent, is that a giant squid has been seen swimming at the surface, the projecting tentacles serving for the head, while the long tentacles, dragging for fifty feet behind, constituted the body. Still, this does not cover all the cases on record, and it even remains to be proved that the great squids ever swim in the manner indicated. A more daring suggestion is that some of the extraordinary sea monsters that flourished when the earth was young are still living, and at the time of the Hassler expedition, in 1870, no less an authority than Louis Agassiz intimated that some animals thought to have been long extinct might still linger in the depths of the sea. The gar pike, that mailed freshwater tyrant, is common enough in parts of the United States as a nuisance, and we find practically the same fish in Eocene strata of the West. The Port Jackson shark of Australia traces his pedigree back to Carboniferous times. A great pleiosaur, swimming at the surface, with head raised and neck outstretched, would harmonize well with some descriptions of the sea serpent. Mosasaurs and his kindred, the sea lizards, that abounded in our Cretaceous sea, are also among the animals that have been nominated for the post of sea serpents. But truth compels us to say that the close of the Cretaceous period, during which these creatures flourished, was most disastrous to living things, and scores of strange species were then blotted out of existence. Exactly what were the causes of such widespread destruction we know not, but Dana calls it "one of the most noted in all geological history." And while "probably not a tenth part of the animal species of the world disappeared at the time . . . yet the change was so comprehensive that no Cretaceous species of vertebrate is yet known to occur in the rocks of the American Tertiary. . . Here ended not only the living species of dinosaurs, of mosasaurs and pterosaurs, but these tribes of reptiles." There is another objection to the majority of these animals, which is that with the exception of one or two of the largest pleiosaurs they were entirely too small to fill the position of sea serpent, few among them reaching a length of even twenty-five feet. And here we may, perhaps, spring a painful surprise on the reader by saying that no animal has actually been measured having a length of even 100 feet. True, books, and among them scientific books, say that the great orca, the longest species of whale, sometimes measures 120 feet from nose to tail, but no one has ever brought such a monster to bag, and the largest that has fallen under a tape line stretched but eighty-nine feet. As for

the Teacher in a Patriarchal Gentleman Seated on a Cushion.
If you can imagine a long room in a house with thatched roof, dark plastered walls, broad doorways closed with paper covered latticed frames which slide in grooves, bare floors matted with perfect fitting straw mats, some tiny tables, one by two feet in size and eight inches high—if you can imagine this, then you can conceive of an ancient schoolroom in Japan.

Again, if you can imagine a patriarchal old gentleman, with sparse beard, a head half bald, a small tuft of hair turned back on the top of his head, then seated on a little cushion behind one of the tiny tables on which a flat stone inkstand, a manuscript school book and a long bamboo pencil stand at one end of which is a fine pointed brush for writing, and a group of some fifty children—a half dozen probably—the boys' heads shaved, except for a circular band of hair exactly at the crown, the girls with long tresses of straight black hair hanging in front of each ear, all dressed in little flowing garments with sleeves like the wings of birds—these children sitting behind their tiny tables, their brushes in hand, and writing, from the teacher's station, strange shaped characters on coarse copy books—imagine this, and you have an ancient Japanese school in session, both teacher and pupils sitting upon the floor.

Things have changed now. The old has utterly passed away. A most efficient educational system, Western in theory and practice, is now in full operation throughout Japan. Common schools and university buildings are dotted all over the country. A thoroughly graded system operates from the primary school to the Imperial University, which ranks with the highest American institutions. The official or government schools are worked out to cover the whole field of education except the religious feature, and this they are endeavoring to supply by an eclectic system of morality, both Oriental and Occidental.

Besides the regular course, which extends from the common school through the high common school, the middle school, the high school, to the university, there are government technical schools for every branch of trade and the professions—commercial, army, navy, agriculture, textile, mechanics, law, medicine, normal, language, etc.

The government maintains a special school for the teaching of every modern language of importance—English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Chinese and Korean. But the English language precedes all other languages, and it is making rapid progress that it is destined to become the spoken language of the nation. One serious criticism against Japan's educational system is that it discourages private schools. Pupils of private schools of equal grade and efficiency with the government schools cannot pass on to the upper official schools with the same facility as pupils of the government schools. When we remember that the government schools are not free schools, and that many excellent private schools supported by foreign capital give students an education practically free, this discrimination of the government would seem to be unwise, and it is likely to be corrected in the near future.

The American nation should be especially proud of Japan's educational record, since it is from America that Japan has taken her lessons in Western learning.—Harper's Weekly.

The Razor's Saw.
"Do you know why we dip a razor in hot water before we begin shaving and you know why some ignorant men say a razor is 'tired'?" asked the barber. "Well, this is all due to the fact that a razor is a saw, not a knife, and it works like a saw, not like a knife. Examined under the microscope, its edge, that looks so smooth to the naked eye, is seen to have innumerable and fine saw-teeth. When these teeth get clogged with dirt all the honing and strapping in the world will do no good—the razor is dull, and nothing will sharpen it. Then is the time the ignorant say it is 'tired,' and stop using it, but the wise know it is only clogged.

"The wise, though, don't suffer their razors to get clogged. They dip their razors in warm water before they use them, and thus the teeth are kept clean. It is because a razor is a saw that lather is used on the beard. The lather doesn't soften the beard, so many people think; it stiffens it, so that it will present a firm and resisting surface to the razor."—New York World.

The Ribbon Fish.
Charles F. Holder, the naturalist, believes that what people see in the ocean and mistake for sea serpents are really ribbon fish. This curious deep-sea fish often grows to a large size. Dr. Andrew Wilson, of the University of Glasgow, chronicles the Lord Norbury, while trawling in the Firth of Forth one day hauled up a ribbon fish which, when stretched upon the deck of the ship, which was of forty tons burden, was longer than the vessel, or sixty feet in length. Says Mr. Holder: "The fish is literally like a ribbon. Those handled by the writer were beautiful diaphanous creatures, clear and jellylike. The color was silver-tipped with blue and splashed with black tiger-like stripes. The forehead is very high, and from the top of the head rises a series of dorsal spines, eight in number, a vivid coral in color, which when erect resembles pompous or a red man, giving the fish a most fantastic appearance."

The Hard-Working Human Heart.
Some one with an aptitude for statistics has been doing a little calculating on the subject of the human heart and its activities. The normal heart, it appears, beats about seventy-five times in a minute; so that an hour's record would be something like 4500 beats. Supposing that a man lived to be fifty, his heart would have beaten 1,862,100 times. If a son of this man, more robust than his father, should all the Scriptural allotment of threescore years and ten, his heart beats would number 2,649,024,000. It is easy to understand, after such a computation, why this hard working servant of the human body so frequently wears out.—Harper's Weekly.

COMMERICAL REVIEW.
General Trade Conditions.
R. G. Dun & Co.'s "Weekly Review of Trade" says: "Awaiting a more satisfactory view of the volume of trade continues large, and the distribution of merchandise taxes shipping facilities. Announcement of a concert effort to restrict production of pig iron indicates that supplies have begun to accumulate. Railway earnings continue to show gains, for September they far exceeded last year's by 8.7 per cent and those of 1901 by 17.2 per cent.

Trade blockades occur to some extent, although the movement of farm products is still unseasonably small. New labor controversies have begun but a number of serious troubles have been averted, and on the whole the number of men idle voluntarily has diminished. Enforced idleness in the iron and steel industry is more than offset by resumption of spindles at cotton mills.

Radstreet's says: Wheat, including flour exports for the week ending September 24 aggregate 3,050,480 bushels, against 1,909,083 last week, 5,077,575 in 1902, 74,127,050 in 1901, 3,242,810 in 1900. For twelve weeks of the cereal year they aggregate 36,214,681 bushels, against 59,009,135 in 1902, 74,127,050 in 1901, 3,242,810 in 1900. For twelve weeks of the cereal year they aggregate 36,214,681 bushels, against 59,009,135 in 1902, 74,127,050 in 1901, 3,242,810 in 1900. For twelve weeks of the cereal year they aggregate 36,214,681 bushels, against 59,009,135 in 1902, 74,127,050 in 1901, 3,242,810 in 1900.

The Chinese Carpenter.
"Did you ever get a Chinese carpenter to stop up a hole in the floor?" asked one flat dweller of another. The other had to admit that he had not. Then the first proceeded to tell his wonderful tale, which the listener would not believe until he tried an Oriental for the same purpose the next month. "There was a worn place in the floor that needed patching, and I thought I'd show my wife what a carpenter I was, so I sawed a square section of the plank out. But I cut my hand the first minute, and had to send for the Chinaman who has a shop right around the corner. When he got to the door he granted something that sounded as if it might mean 'Where?' and I pointed to the square hole over in a dark corner.

"Wow," he said as he squinted at it a minute. Then he turned around and walked out. I thought, well, I didn't know what to think. I was so amazed, I couldn't understand his giving up such a simple job. I was still puzzling over it half an hour later when I heard a knock. He said 'Wow,' or some other word like it, and held up a square board. Then he walked over to the dark corner of the room and—what do you think? He put the square in, and it fitted just as if it had grown there. And he had just taken a peep at the hole from where he was standing in the door." The flat dweller's tale is no fairy story. That's the way a Chinese carpenter stops a hole in the floor.

The Bureau of Forestry.
It is interesting to note the evolution of what was formerly the Division, but now the Bureau of Forestry. The work anticipated is seen in nature in the last few years, until now it embraces a much wider area of interests than one would suppose belonged to the noble science of forestry.

Chicago—Cattle—Good to prime steers \$5.00 to \$5.10; poor to medium \$3.00 to \$3.25; stockers and feeders \$2.25 to \$3.00; heifers \$4.00 to \$4.50; calves \$1.40 to \$2.75; bulls \$2.00 to \$4.00; Western steers \$3.50 to \$4.25; Western steers \$3.00 to \$4.00. Hogs—Receipts today 18,000 head; tomorrow 18,000. Choice steady; others lower; mixed and butchers \$5.05 to \$5.35; good to choice heavy \$8.00 to \$8.50; light \$7.50 to \$8.00; heavy \$8.00 to \$8.50; light \$7.50 to \$8.00. Sheep—Receipts 22,000 head. Choice steady \$3.40 to \$4.35; fair to choice mixed \$2.25 to \$3.40; native lambs \$3.50 to \$5.00.

Industrial and Scientific Notes.
The Southern States raise 75 per cent of the world's cotton. The trusts number 183, which control about 2000 active plants. Railway earnings are \$1,000,000 a week greater this year than last, and a further 50 per cent of the inhabitants of Cincinnati are of German blood. A plague of white ants is devouring the wooden houses in New Orleans. The profit to the government on pennies pays the entire expenses of the mint.

ALL TIRED OUT.
The weary, worn-out, all-tired feelings come to everybody who taxes the kidneys. When the kidneys are over-worked they fail to perform the duties nature has provided for them to do. When the kidneys fall dangerous diseases quickly follow, urinary disorders, diabetes, dropsy, rheumatism, Bright's disease. Doan's Kidney Pills cure all kidney and bladder ills. Read the following case:
Veteran Joshua Heller, of 706 South Walnut street, Urbana, Ill., says: "In the fall of 1890 after getting Doan's Kidney Pills at Cunningham Bros' drug store in Champaign and taking a course of treatment I told the readers of the paper that they had relieved me of kidney trouble, disposed of a large back with pain, relieved my lameness and beneath the shoulder blades. During the interval which had elapsed I have had occasion to resort to Doan's Kidney Pills when I noticed warnings of attack. On each and every occasion the results obtained were just as satisfactory as when the pills were first brought to my notice. I just as emphatically indorse the preparation today as I did over two years ago."

A FREE TRIAL of this great kidney medicine which cured Mr. Heller will be mailed on application to any part of the United States. Medical advice free; strictly confidential. Address: Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y. For sale by all druggists, price 50 cents per box.

A Maiden's Troubles.
Helen—Gertrude lay awake almost the whole night last night worrying. Clifford—What was she worrying about? "Oh, she's afraid the man she is going to marry may love her more for her money than for herself."

No Hair?
"My hair was falling out very fast and I was greatly alarmed. I then tried Ayer's Hair Vigor and my hair stopped falling, once." Mrs. G. A. McVay, Alexandria, O.
The trouble is your hair does not have life enough. Act promptly. Save your hair. Feed it with Ayer's Hair Vigor. If the gray hairs are beginning to show, Ayer's Hair Vigor will restore color every time.

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