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**HOROLOGICAL  
HISTORY**



THE LOCH NESS MONSTER.

From a photograph by Mr. R. K. Wilson, F.R.C.S.]

[By courtesy of the *Daily Mail*.

# THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

AND OTHERS

Rupert T. Gould

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**HOROLOGICAL  
HISTORY**

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## PREFACE

In this book, I have tried to put on record what I believe to be reliable evidence concerning one of the most remarkable occurrences in recent years—the discovery, in a Scottish loch, of at least one specimen of what is probably the rarest and least-known of all living creatures.

To deal adequately with the material I have accumulated would have provided, I think, full-time employment not only for myself but for a secretary, two clerks, and a draughtsman. Not being able to afford such luxuries, I have been compelled to play Pooh-Bah—and I hope that the charitably-minded will find in this fact some excuse for the book's more obvious shortcomings. I have done what I could—but I am painfully aware that much more could have been done if I had possessed larger resources—or better scientific qualifications.

It will be noticed that I have not tried to make the drawings look naturalistic, but have used a few simple conventions. The originals are chiefly outline sketches, either made from memory by persons who were not trained artists, or drawn by myself in consultation with witnesses who could not draw at all. In consequence, I considered that a conventional treatment of the material would be less misleading in appearance, while obtaining greater clearness in depicting the outlines—the main feature of the original sketches.

As regards copyright matter, I am indebted to Messrs. Cassell & Co. for permission to quote from Sir Arthur Rostron's *Home from the Sea*. My acknowledgments are also due to the *Daily Mail* (Frontispiece); to the *Daily Record and Mail* (Plate I); Wardour Films Ltd. (Plate II); the *Wide World Magazine* (Plates III and IV); and to Wide World Photos, Ltd. (Plates VI and VII).

Figs. 27 (*b*) and 40 are based, by permission, upon drawings which have appeared in the *Illustrated London News*. Fig. 31 I owe to the courtesy of Mr. R. Elmbhirst, and fig. 44 to that of Dr. A. C. Oudemans. Figs. 33 and 35 are re-drawn from two appearing in the (Oslo) *Aftenpost* and *Tidens Tegn* respectively; while figs. 32, 41, 43 and 45 are from my *Case for the Sea-Serpent*, and I am indebted to its publish-

ers, Messrs. Philip Allan, for the friendly manner in which they have permitted me to make unrestricted use of any matter in that book.

On the personal side my thanks are due, first and foremost, to my friend Mr. Alexander Keiller, the “onlie begetter” of this book. Secondly, to all those who have supplied me with information and evidence. Most of their names appear in the text—I trust that they will here accept a general, but none the less sincere, tribute to their helpfulness and courtesy.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Helene Bargmann (of the *Discovery* Investigations, South Kensington), who has acted as proof-reader and also given me much valuable advice on many points.

RUPERT T. GOULD

Ashtead, 1934

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## INTRODUCTION

During the autumn of 1933, reports of an unusual creature inhabiting Loch Ness began to attract general attention. Such reports had been current in the neighbourhood for some months past, and had appeared intermittently in the *Northern Chronicle* (Inverness) and the *Inverness Courier*. By October, several newspapers of even wider circulation had begun to devote considerable space to the subject—and with good reason, for it offered obvious possibilities of a “sensation” similar in kind, but vastly superior in popular appeal, to that produced by the early reports of the Okapi.

Accounts of the creature—which became, and remains, known (or at least spoken of) as the “Loch Ness monster”<sup>1</sup>—varied considerably in detail; but all were underlaid with a groundwork of the unusual and the mysterious. Some eye-witnesses had seen—or were said to have seen—a long, snake-like neck and head rising out of the Loch—others had observed a large dark hump (or a succession of such humps) moving at speeds which left no doubt that it was some living creature—others, again, had noticed a violent commotion of the water produced by some powerful but invisible agency, or had seen a marked V-shaped wake, obviously emanating from some large and speedy creature swimming just below the surface. Such phenomena are far from common anywhere on the coasts of the British Isles; that such could occur, or even be reported to occur, in a fresh-water loch well above sea-level, and generally regarded as inaccessible to anything larger than a salmon, bordered on the incredible.

The problem obviously required—but, so far as I know, still awaits—investigation at first-hand by some qualified zoologist with an open mind. In default of such treatment, many “explanations” were offered. I shall have occasion to discuss some of the more reasonable of these later; it is enough to mention here that they ranged from mass-hallucination to serpent-worship, and from dead elephants to living plesiosaurs. Yet the “monster” pertinaciously refused either to be explained away or to vacate the scene at the end of the customary nine

<sup>1</sup>So far as I can trace, the expression was first used by the *Inverness Courier*, 9.vi.33

days; accounts of its having been sighted here, there and almost everywhere in the Loch continued to appear week after week—until sceptics began to complain that the hoax not only deserved but demanded burial, while the more open-minded became gradually convinced that behind so much smoke there must be a fairly large fire.

At the time, I was not among their number. Insofar as I had any theory on the subject, I considered that the witnesses had probably seen, but failed to recognise, some well-known sea-creature which, in some unexplained manner, had made its way into Loch Ness. A large sturgeon, for example, a beluga<sup>2</sup> or a seal, suddenly appearing in a land-locked basin where nothing of the kind had ever been seen before, would naturally give rise to reports whose surprising details sprang from the attempts of honest onlookers to describe something which, while familiar to coast-dwellers and to scientific men, was outside their own experience.

At the beginning of November my friend Mr. Alexander Keiller suggested that I should visit Loch Ness to collect and examine the facts in connection with the “monster”—very generously volunteering to bear the expense of my doing so. Such an opportunity was not to be neglected, and I hurried North as soon as I could.

I was, of course, far from being the first enquirer in the field, or even the first to attempt a systematic collation of the evidence. In October, the *Daily Mail* had despatched a “Special Commissioner”<sup>3</sup> on the same errand; and on reaching Edinburgh I conferred with Mr. P. G. Stalker, of the *Scotsman*, who had collected sufficient information for a series of articles,<sup>4</sup> and had also broadcast on the subject. Furthermore, Mr. Herries—the chief reporter of the *Scotsman*—was in the field at the same time as myself, although we did not meet. At a later date, the *Daily Mail* despatched quite an elaborate expedition, headed by Mr. M. A. Wetherell; and representatives of several other English newspapers, and even some foreign organs,<sup>5</sup> arrived to collect information.

<sup>2</sup>Or “white whale.” See p. 110.

<sup>3</sup>Mr. Percy Cater.

<sup>4</sup>*Scotsman*, 16–18.x.33. His broadcast statement (Scottish Regional, 21.x.33) was printed in the *Listener*, 11.xi.33.

<sup>5</sup>E.g. The *Matin* (Paris), and the *Osaka Moinichi* and *Tokyo Nichinichi*.

I have had no journalistic training, and I was not exactly overjoyed at the prospect of having to collect information by personal enquiry. But in one respect I had the advantage. I was free to take what time I pleased over my enquiries, and under no compulsion to publish my results either immediately or through any particular channel: a fact which I found myself compelled to point out to various papers which desired me to supply them with free copy—or, alternatively, to become their representative and furnish daily reports by telephone.

After spending two days in Edinburgh, where I examined the files of the *Scotsman* and drew up a list of eye-witnesses whom I wished, if possible, to interview, I proceeded to Inverness. The theory which I then held—that the “monster” was some well-known sea-creature—presupposed some channel through which it could make its way into the Loch; and accordingly my first enquiries at Inverness were devoted to clearing up this question.

## Loch Ness

It will be useful, at this point, to give a short account of the Loch and its surroundings.

Loch Ness is the northernmost, and largest, of the three inland lochs—Lochy, Oich and Ness—in the “Great Glen,” a rift-valley running in a practically straight line across the mainland of Scotland from S.W. to N.E. In 1803–1823 the three lochs were united by cuts to form the Caledonian Canal.<sup>6</sup>

Loch Ness (fig. 1) is 22½ miles long, with a maximum breadth (at Urquhart Bay) of 1¾ miles. Long reputed to be bottomless, it was carefully sounded-out some thirty years ago at the instance of the late Sir John Murray; and the results of his bathymetrical survey showed that while the average depth, along the Loch’s centre line, exceeded 500 feet, the maximum (roughly midway) is about 751 feet.<sup>7</sup> It is unlikely that further surveys will materially increase this figure. By reason of its great average depth Loch Ness, while inferior in area to Lough Neagh and several others, is the largest body of fresh water to

<sup>6</sup>Designed by Telford—a fine piece of engineering, but a commercial failure.

<sup>7</sup>See the *Geographical Journal*, Vol. XXIV (1904). The survey obtained, in all, some 1,400 soundings.

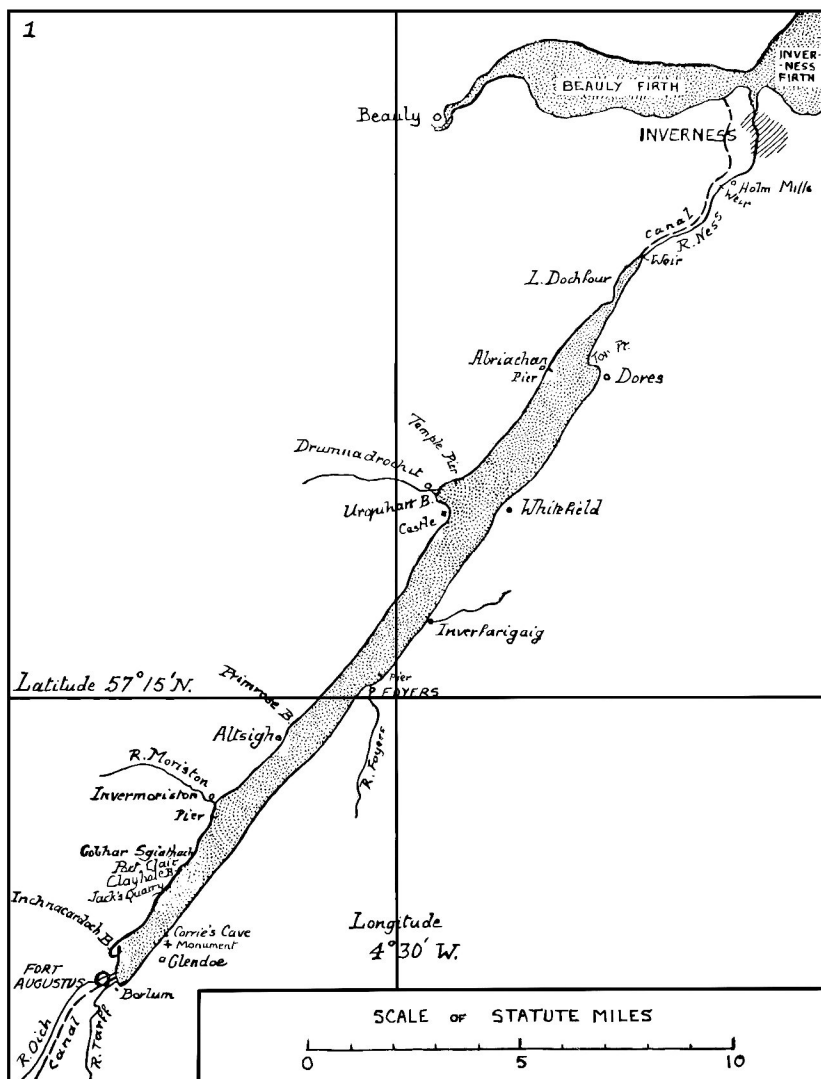


Fig. 1.—LOCH NESS AND VICINITY.

be found in the British Isles. For the same reason, its waters never freeze to any perceptible extent—in fact, their temperature rarely falls to 35° Fahrenheit.

The Loch is fed by four rivers—the Oich, Tarff, Foyers and Moriston—and many small burns. Its level varies slightly in different seasons, but is never less than 50 feet above sea-level. The bottom is mainly of thick peaty mud; in places, of stiff yellow clay; and, at one or two points, of bare rock.

A tragic fatality in 1932<sup>8</sup> directed attention to two associated myths of the many connected with the Loch; that it “never gives up its dead,” and that its sides are honeycombed, below water, with enormous caverns. The first of these is simply untrue—and there is no evidence, worthy of the name, to support the second. Several bodies have been washed ashore in Loch Ness—one as recently as January 9, 1934.<sup>9</sup> And while divers have been credited, in the Press, with seeing the caverns, I suspect that such reports emanated from persons who knew very little about diving.

## The approaches to Loch Ness

There are three, and only three, channels of access from the sea to the Loch—the Caledonian Canal at its south-west end, the Canal and the River Ness at its north-eastern. Credulous persons in the neighbourhood, and elsewhere, occasionally avow a belief, or at least a suspicion, that a subterranean tunnel exists, connecting Loch Ness with the sea—its distal end being usually located in Loch Hourn. Unfortunately, the facts of the case forbid such a supposition. If a tunnel existed, the surface of the Loch would be at sea-level, and not a permanent 50 feet, or so, higher—furthermore, the waters of the Loch would rise and fall with the tides, and would be at least brackish, if not definitely salt.

It may be thought that I have omitted a fourth means of access; the River Oich, which enters Loch Ness (side by side with the Canal) at

<sup>8</sup>Mrs. Olaf Hambro, the well-known lady golfer, was drowned within a few yards of safety when swimming ashore from a motor-boat which had caught fire. Divers failed to recover the body.

<sup>9</sup>*Morning Post*, 10.i.34.

Fort Augustus. But any creature entering via the Oich would have had to use the Canal for the greater part of its journey<sup>10</sup> from the sea, and might just as well, so far as we are now concerned, have done so for the whole of it.

I began by investigating the question of whether a sea-creature could enter the Loch through the Canal. In doing so, I received invaluable assistance from the Resident Engineer, Mr. E. W. Porter, M.Inst.C.E., M.I.Mech.E.

## The Caledonian Canal

It is undoubtedly true that a creature as large as any known species of whale could traverse the entire length of the Canal. The smallest of the locks is 169 feet long, with a maximum breadth of 40 feet, and a depth of 21 feet over the sill. The Canal Company undertakes to pass any vessel through the Canal whose length, beam and draught do not exceed 160 feet, 38 feet and 14 feet respectively. If, therefore, any marine biologist of ample means were desirous of domesticating a rorqual in Loch Ness, and succeeded in obtaining the concurrence of the Ness Fisheries Board and various other authorities (including the R.S.P.C.A., for such a whale would not take kindly to fresh water, and its food supply would present several problems), its conveyance thither—apart from any slight reluctance it might exhibit—would be a comparatively simple matter.

But to assume that a whale, or anything larger than a salmon, could make its way through the Canal *unobserved*—as we must suppose the Loch Ness creature to have done—is quite another matter. Consider, for the moment, that portion of the Canal which connects Loch Ness—or, rather, Loch Dochfour, its ante-room—with the Beaully Firth.

Emerging from Loch Dochfour, the Canal runs for about three-quarters of a mile, at loch-level, to Dochgarroch, where there is a single lock. From Dochgarroch to Muirtown is a level reach, 4 miles long<sup>11</sup> but at Muirtown there are four locks in immediate sequence, like a

<sup>10</sup>From Corpach to Loch Lochy—the River Lochy being obstructed by the falls of Mucomer.

<sup>11</sup>Salmon and eels have been found in this portion of the Canal, but seal have never been seen in it. Incidentally, the Canal Company has no fishing or shooting rights in its own water, but may join in prosecuting poachers.



flight of steps. At Clachnaharry, rather more than half a mile farther on, there is a single lock; and another beyond it, the “Sea Lock,” gives access to the waters of the Beaully Firth.

The various lock-gates are never opened except to pass vessels through; and while they are fitted with small permanently-open sluices to off-set leakage, and so maintain the level of the various reaches, these sluices (of various patterns) have a maximum aperture of some 4 square feet, and are usually shut down to about a third of this, or less. Assuming a complete suspension of traffic in the Canal, a salmon might still make its way, via the sluices, through the closed lock-gates, and so to Loch Ness—but such a feat would be impossible for anything larger. It must therefore be accepted that the creature, if it came in this way, passed through any particular lock in company with a vessel.

Although not quite so busy as the Suez Canal, the Caledonian carries a considerable volume of traffic. Apart from Messrs. McBrayne’s pleasure-steamers, which only run during the summer months, the craft using it are mostly fishing-vessels; steam drifters (up to go feet long, with 64-foot propellers), trawlers of up to 200 tons, and motor fishing-boats. Formerly, when sailing-craft predominated, much of the traffic was “tracked” by hand; nowadays, practically all vessels go through under their own power. But they are invariably worked through the locks by the Company’s employees: and this point is of importance, for these men are instructed to report, forthwith, any unusual disturbance of the water which they may observe when a vessel is being locked or unlocked. Much of the timber-work of the locks is by no means in its early youth; and sudden leaks, indicated by surface eddies, are not infrequent. It may be noted that, under the Canal Company’s regulations, vessels are not locked up or down any part of the Canal by night, except during “very clear weather, or moonlight.”<sup>12</sup>

In such circumstances, it will be conceded that the chances are very heavily against any sea-creature of considerable size making its way unobserved, and in company with even a small vessel, through a single lock (unless it were asleep, or dead, and in tow)<sup>13</sup> and that in

<sup>12</sup>Regulation XIV.

<sup>13</sup>One of my numerous and indefatigable correspondents suggested that the creature had “... attached itself by a sucker, as I understand certain fish do, to the plating be-

the case of the quadruple lock at Muirtown they are so slight as to be hardly worth estimating. Such an occurrence is not *absolutely* impossible—but that is all that can be said for it.

We may therefore dismiss, I think, the supposition that any large sea-creature could make its way, unobserved, into Loch Ness through the north-eastern portion of the Canal. As regards the south-western portion, the same reasoning applies with even greater force. There are seven locks between Dochfour and the Beaully Firth; between Fort Augustus and Corpach there are seventeen—eight of these, at Banavie, being contiguous, and known locally as “Neptune’s Staircase.” No creature, surely, could remain so unruffled after eight successive lockings, in very confined quarters which it shared with a vessel using her own power freely, that no indication of its presence was even then observable on the surface.

## The River Ness

Setting aside the Caledonian Canal, then, as a means of access, there only remains the River Ness. This forms the natural—and, until 1823, the only—outlet from Loch Ness to the Beaully Firth. About 7 miles long, with an average breadth of some 50 yards, it runs from Loch Dochfour through Inverness, where it is spanned by several bridges, and empties itself into the Firth.

It is tidal for about a mile from the mouth, so that the fall of water is some 50 feet in 6 miles. There is a weir at Holm Mills (about 3 miles below Dochfour) and another at Dochfour itself. There are also several partial weirs, extending half-way across, or so, built by the local fishing proprietors to afford salmon-pools.

Quite apart from the fact that the Ness is generally shallow throughout most of its extent, the two main weirs might appear to form effective obstacles to any creature ascending the river. But there is a “fish-gap” in each weir; and while, at normal states of the river, the outflow through the gaps is too vigorous to be overcome by any swimming creature, this is not the case during a heavy spate, such as commonly occurs in January or February. At these times, the weirs

tween the bilge and the keel. ...” I pointed out, in reply, that a remora is scarcely big enough to be termed a “monster.”

are practically submerged, and the current through the gaps runs at no great speed.

Writing to me on this point, Mr. Porter remarks:

“The Fish Gap in the big Canal weir at Dochfour is 60 feet wide at the top, 30 feet at the bottom, and when there is a spate may have a depth of 7 feet 6 inches, as a maximum, and there would not be much velocity through it then as the water below the weir at such times is almost level with that at the upside of the weir. At normal water level, when there is only a foot over the crest at the side of the Fish Gap, there will be 4 feet of water through the Gap, but having a high velocity and impossible I think for anything to swim through.

“The only other complete weir crosses the River Ness, about 9 miles up from the Sea situated near Holm Mills, and the Fish Gap there is 24 feet wide at the top, 12 feet at the bottom and 9 feet deep below its crest. Probably during the time of a spate there is 5 feet of water over the bottom of the Gap. ... There are no obstructions in the way of gratings at either of these weirs.”

It must be remembered, of course, that while there may be as much as 5 feet of water in the Holm Mills fish-gap during a spate, it does not follow that one could find 5 feet of water throughout the course of the Ness from Dochfour to the Firth. There are shallows, formed by rocks, at many places—although whether such shallows extend completely across the river at any given point could scarcely be determined without a detailed survey. But it appears at least quite possible that, during a heavy spate, a creature drawing not more, say, than 5 feet of water (and, necessarily, a powerful swimmer) might make its way unobserved, by night, into Loch Ness.<sup>14</sup> Such, at least, is the conclusion which I formed after a provisional examination on the spot.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup>See, on this point, the statement of Miss MacDonald (p. 32).

<sup>15</sup>I expressed it, as clearly as I could, in an article published in the *Times*, 9.xii.33. I was therefore, a little disappointed when the *Christian World*, in its leader of 14.xii.33, stated, when commenting on that article, that “... Commander Gould disposes of the idea that the monster came in from the sea; *there is no channel to the loch navigable by anything larger than a salmon.*” The italics are mine.

## The transport problem

So far, all was plane sailing. It seemed fairly well-established that a sea-creature *might* make its way, during a spate, into Loch Ness. From my point of view, it was exceedingly likely that one *had* done so. In order to identify this creature, the evidence of eye-witnesses had next to be obtained; and here the question of transport necessarily arose.

I had no car, and hiring one meant hiring a driver, whose presence might (and whose wages certainly would) prove rather an incubus. The Loch steamer had been taken off for the winter. The buses round the Loch ran at rather infrequent intervals—which meant that if my work took me off their beaten track I should subsequently waste a lot of time waiting for them. The distances involved were more than I cared to tackle on foot, or even on a bicycle. A motor-cycle clearly picked itself as the solution.

For some twelve years before the War I was a keen motorcyclist, amassing much hard-bought experience upon mounts now seen only in the Pioneer Runs. While I have never actually ridden a Holden,<sup>16</sup> I have held its handlebars while the owner filled up<sup>17</sup>; undeterred by chronic backfiring, I have wound a tube-ignited Bollée for a solid twenty minutes; I have been cast with great suddenness from a Singer, whose tiny engine was housed inside the back-wheel, into the path of an oncoming tram-car; and I know, as well as most people, what the euphemism “light pedal assistance” used to connote. But I had been out of the saddle for nearly twenty years, and I looked round for a mount with some trepidation.

However, fortune favoured me. I picked up, in Inverness, a sturdy little “lightweight” machine which proved to be fast, comfortable, and very easy to handle.<sup>18</sup> Although obviously meant for a smaller rider—standing erect, I am 6 feet 4½ inches, and in any position I

<sup>16</sup>The first motor-cycle ever manufactured in England, and the second anywhere in the world. It had a four-cylinder water-cooled engine, whose crankshaft formed the axle of the diminutive back-wheel.

<sup>17</sup>With water—for the engine.

<sup>18</sup>A 246-c.c 1931 Matchless; second-hand, untuned, condition unknown, price £12. It was the best bargain I ever made in my life.

scale rather more than 17 stone—she<sup>19</sup> took me twice round the Loch at a cost of about half-a-crown for petrol, and proved fully capable of going anywhere and doing anything. If I am to judge of the bulk by this casual sample, no praise of mine could be too high for the modern motor-cycle.

## The collection of evidence

I left Inverness on November 14, and proceeded round the Loch in easy stages via Invermoriston, Fort Augustus, Foyers and Dores, interviewing every eye-witness I could hear of, and putting up for the night wherever I happened to be.

In collecting evidence, I began by explaining that I was not a journalist, but only a little-known author anxious to obtain accurate information. I asked leave to take notes—this was always granted—and I transcribed such notes, never later than the evening of the same day, into a “fair” notebook; adding, generally, tracings from the 1-inch or 6-inch Ordnance sheets (showing the positions of the creature and the observer), and a note of the (calculated) altitude and bearing of the sun at the time. If the witnesses could draw, I got them to make a sketch of what they had seen. If they could not, I made an outline sketch under their inspection and direction. I put no leading questions, and offered no opinions or theories of my own; nor, unless this was unavoidable, did I mention to any witness what I had heard from another. If two witnesses, in company, had both seen the creature, I did my best to obtain independent statements from each of them, and did not compare such statements until after they had been transcribed. I eschewed the evidence of children—they may be accurate observers, but the tendency to “go one better” is always present. Lastly, if a witness had used a telescope or binoculars for viewing the creature, I compared the instrument, for power and definition, with my own binoculars (Ross, power 8).

Having finished my first circuit of the Loch, I spent a day at Inverness examining the evidence I had collected, and framing supplementary questions to clear up discrepancies, or to cover any point which

<sup>19</sup> A motor-cycle has quite as much personality as a ship. I christened her “Cynthia”—after the heroine of *Christopher Strong* (in the film; “Felicity” in the book).

I had missed. I then made another circuit of the Loch in the opposite direction, elucidating these points and also interviewing various new witnesses.

During my rides I kept as constant a look-out as I could, with camera and binoculars always handy, on the waters of the Loch; but I was never fortunate enough to see the creature myself—although on November 23 it was seen from Temple Pier, Drumnadrochit,<sup>20</sup> and an attempt made to photograph it, about an hour after I had left the pier on my way to Inverness. The chances against seeing it, except by mere luck, are great. For example, Mr. G. McQueen, the A.A. Scout for the district, saw it first in August—yet although he was on the Loch roads, in the course of his duties, practically every day, he only saw it once again during the ensuing six months.<sup>21</sup> It is well to remember that it is farther from one end of the Loch to the other than from Dover to Calais—no single observer, however assiduous, could hope to cover more than a fraction of the whole area.

### An untenable theory

In the evening of my second day out from Inverness on my first round of the Loch, I found myself compelled, after seeing about a dozen witnesses, to admit that my provisional theory was untenable. No known creature—sturgeon, beluga or anything else—agreed with the facts; and by then I was fully satisfied that, in the main, I was collecting facts, and not day-dreams or hallucinations. The witnesses, almost without exception, impressed me very much indeed; they were quiet and cautious, tending to minimise the importance of their respective experiences and to understate, rather than to exaggerate, what they had seen. Those who know the Highlander will not need to be told that, high or low, they were uniformly obliging, courteous and dignified—and that they would rightly have deemed themselves insulted if I had been foolish enough to offer any return for the information which they freely gave me; but it is proper for me to remark, in addition, that

<sup>20</sup>By the Rev. N. Dundas and Mrs. Dundas. The latter's snapshot, when developed, showed no sign of the creature. In view of the fact that this was only in sight for a few seconds, such is not surprising.

<sup>21</sup>See pp. 44, 62 for details of these two sightings.

I saw no indication of a faculty with which Highlanders are sometimes credited—that of telling an enquirer what they imagine he wishes to hear. In my case, to do so would have been difficult, since I was careful to give no indication of what this might be.

## The Press reports

I enjoyed, not unnaturally, many opportunities of comparing a witness' own statement with Press accounts of the same incident. In consequence of this, I was compelled to make it my invariable rule (which I have followed in this book, and shall follow in any similar work) that I would accept no Press report, *in detail*, unless I could verify it at first-hand, either personally or by correspondence.

I read a good many newspapers; and I have long ceased to trouble my head about the curious conventions which obtain among the more vigorously-conducted dailies. That the most commonplace engagement should invariably be styled a “romance,” and that any victim of accident or sudden illness should forthwith be “rushed” to hospital, now fails to arouse even my mild surprise; when a sensational “story” is allotted half a column, and its subsequent disavowal five lines, I am prepared to believe that it is the sheer lack of space, and not any dislike to admitting error, which produces this curious contrast; and in time I shall no doubt bring myself to believe that the methods of the “Stunt Press,” and of scientific investigation, are not diametrically opposite.

I regret to say, however, that such is my present conviction; and during my stay at Loch Ness I discovered (no doubt as the result of a subconscious *idée fixe*) much to support it. Over and over again, I had occasion to compare a personal statement, made to myself, with a Press statement attributed to the same witness; and in far too many cases I found that the more sensational features of the latter were explicitly disavowed, as interpolations, by their reputed author. Several reasons, including the law of libel, preclude me from giving chapter and verse in support of this statement; but I have notes of over a dozen instances of the kind. I must add, however, in common fairness, that my remarks are not meant to apply to the work of any of the journalists whom I met personally—and that, far from regarding me as an interloper, they were uniformly helpful.

## A provisional conclusion

On principle, then, I found myself compelled to discard all Press reports, and to rely solely upon the more soberly-coloured accounts which I obtained from eye-witnesses. Yet what remained was, in all conscience, surprising enough. Try as I might to keep the independent items of evidence separate, it was impossible to blink the fact that they were gradually fitting themselves together, in my mind, like the fragments of a jig-saw puzzle—and as the design began to appear it showed quite plainly that the Loch Ness “monster,” while definitely a large living creature of anomalous type, was not an isolated “prehistoric” survival, but was related, at practically all points, to such creatures as that seen off Gloucester, Mass. (1817), by H.M.S. *Dædalus* (1848), in Loch Hourn (1872), in the Kyle of Loch Alsh (1893), by the *Valhalla* (1905) and by H.M.S. *Hilary* (1917)—to quote only a few of the leading cases.<sup>22</sup> In short, on the evidence I collected, the Loch Ness “monster” stands revealed as one of the creatures popularly, and incorrectly,<sup>23</sup> termed “sea-serpents.”

I must repeat here that when I went North my mental attitude towards the Loch Ness “monster” was one of detachment, not untinged with pity for a number of honest but misguided persons who were making (so I judged) much unnecessary fuss about a goose which they took for a swan. Of all possible or conceivable eventualities, the one farthest from my mind was that I should be confronted with a mass of testimony demonstrating that a sea-creature, in whose existence most people disbelieve, was domiciled in a fresh-water loch. Still, “facts are stubborn chieles ...,” and only a totally unscientific mind will dismiss a statement of fact as impossible, *a priori*, without investigating the evidence upon which that statement is based.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, if anyone chooses to assert that I went to Loch Ness with the intention (conscious or subconscious) of identifying the

<sup>22</sup>See Appendix.

<sup>23</sup>Popularly, because their heads and necks resemble those of serpents. Incorrectly, because it is fairly certain that they are not serpents at all.

<sup>24</sup>Australian readers of this book may be interested to note that Lactantius declared that those who believed in the existence of antipodes were undoubtedly mad; while St. Augustine added that, in any event, it was physically impossible for such territories to be inhabited.



“monster” as a “sea-serpent,” and points for confirmation to the fact that I have already committed a book about such creatures, and am an avowed believer in their existence, I have no means of disproving his assertion. But if I am any judge of what I think, and of how I form my convictions, I can—and I do—contradict it most emphatically. I retained my original theory—that some known creature had found its way into the Loch—so long as it appeared to fit the facts; I only discarded it under the compulsion of what I consider to be reliable and convincing evidence.

My change of opinion was a gradual process; but I can date its beginning from the evening of November 15, when I was at Invermoriston. After dinner I walked to Port Clair and back, ruminating on the evidence I had collected that afternoon at Altsigh. In several points of detail, that evidence coincided in a most remarkable manner with Dr. Matheson’s account of the creature he saw in the Kyle of Loch Alsh (1893).<sup>25</sup> The information had been volunteered, not extracted; I had made sure that the witnesses knew nothing of Matheson’s story; and, after some reflection, I concluded that the resemblance, in detail, of the two accounts strongly suggested, if it did no more, that the observers had seen, and described, creatures similar in type.

A day or two later, at Fort Augustus, I took notes of Mr. Russell’s experience, and a copy of his sketch.<sup>26</sup> Here, again, I noted the resemblance, in detail, between his account and Captain Cringle’s description (and sketch)<sup>27</sup> of the creature seen from the s.s. *Umfuli*, in the South Atlantic, in 1893; and I ascertained that Mr. Russell, at the date (October 1, 1933) when he saw the “monster,” had never heard of Captain Cringle’s very similar experience.

I continued my work, making no alteration in my methods, and still pursuing my plan of putting no leading questions, even though I now had a workable theory on which to base them. I remained on the alert for any evidence which might compel me to discard my new theory, either in favour of that which I formerly held, or of any other—but (“naturally,” some may say) I found none. Yet I went out of my way to interview several confirmed sceptics—of whom there were a

<sup>25</sup>See pp. 185, 186.

<sup>26</sup>Fig. 19.

<sup>27</sup>See p. 187.

good many to be found, even locally—and I did my best to preserve an entirely open mind, remembering the familiar saying about “... that ever-recurring tragedy of science—a beautiful theory slain by an ugly fact.” Whatever scientific men might think of my work—and I was painfully aware that my qualifications as a field-naturalist were almost negligible—I had, I considered, a duty to perform; the duty of obtaining accurate information, and of making it generally available. And I tried to perform that duty as well as I could.

I still regret that, as I said before, no qualified zoologist thought it worth while to do as I did; and I consider that some of the newspapers which investigated the monster went the wrong way to work. If they had given some young Scottish B.Sc.—and, without doubt, many such were available—a free hand to collect information, with no time-limit on his activities, and no obligation to turn in sensational copy at stated intervals, the results would have been both immediately and permanently valuable. He would have been on his own ground, and among his own people: they would have talked to him as no one could expect them to talk to a Sassenach (although, personally, I have no complaint whatever on that score): and he would have been able to assess, rapidly and almost automatically, the combined effect of various factors—such as local traditions, prejudices, ways of speech and thinking, etc.—which a visitor could only evaluate slowly and piecemeal. However, that is merely a personal opinion—and, from the journalistic standpoint, such a proceeding would no doubt have few attractions.

## The history of a Press communiqué

I finally returned to Inverness on November 23. Before starting South, I drafted a short communiqué for circulation to the Press. I had originally intended to make no immediate statement, but to prepare my results for publication in book form. However, on reflection I judged that this would scarcely be fair—or politic. The Press had shown a certain amount—in one or two cases, an almost inconvenient amount—of interest in my doings; furthermore, at least two papers, the *Scotsman* and *Inverness Courier*, had been actively helpful in various ways. I felt that I owed them some return—and I also felt that when I arrived South I should not get very much peace until the Press learned at least

a little about what I had done and what opinion I had formed. On the other hand, I did not wish to show preference to any particular paper.

Accordingly, I drafted the following communiqué, intended for the Press Association:

“Lieut.-Commr. R. T. Gould, R.N. (ret.), left Inverness on Saturday<sup>28</sup> after making an independent personal investigation, on the spot, of the evidence in connection with the so-called “Loch Ness monster.” In the course of his enquiry he made two complete circuits of the Loch shores, and obtained first-hand information from some fifty eye-witnesses.

“He considers that the evidence which he has collected indicates clearly that the ‘monster’ is a large living creature of anomalous type, agreeing closely and in detail with the majority of the reports collected in his book *The Case for the Sea-Serpent* (1930). In his opinion, no other theory can be advanced which covers the whole of the facts. He hopes to publish his results in book form at an early date.”

I thought then, as I still think, that I had said enough to indicate that I was not a practical joker, but a serious enquirer who had taken a good deal of pains and come to a rather interesting conclusion. In short, I considered that the communiqué had some slight “news-value”; and I entrusted it to the Press Association representative at Inverness with some expectation of seeing it become the subject of fairly general Press comment. I ought to explain—although it must, by now, have become fairly clear—that my journalistic experience is exceedingly slight.

Matters turned out rather differently. The communiqué appeared (I believe) in one Sunday paper, in the *Scotsman* (28.xi.33) and in the *Inverness Courier* (29.xi.33). I could not trace any further appearance—in particular, no London paper seemed to have heard of it.

Rather perplexed, I telephoned from Glasgow, on November 28, to the Press Association office in London, and proposed to dictate the communiqué then and there. No sooner, however, had the phrase “Loch Ness monster” unguardedly escaped me, than the voice at

<sup>28</sup> 25.xi.33.

the other end—distant in more senses than one—remarked, “Oh, we don’t want that—we don’t believe in it.”

I am not easily annoyed—but I must plead guilty to a certain irritation at hearing this remark. I had just finished three weeks of the hardest work I ever did in my life, and I was in no mood to be silenced in this summary fashion. I said so—with some emphasis; and after an interval my interlocutor consented to jot down my message (incidentally making rather heavy weather over the word “anomalous”).

However, nothing continued to happen, and as the job of inducing the Press to accept free copy on the subject of the “monster” seemed both thankless and hopeless, I abandoned it. On my return, however, I heard, to my surprise and gratification, that the *Times* might be inclined to consider a special article; and before very long the memory of my previous disappointments was obliterated by the contemplation of what must, I imagine, be the “free-lance journalist’s dream”—a three-column, world-copyright, signed *Times* article, with a leader to back it.<sup>29</sup>

## Correspondence

This article originated a good deal of correspondence, both public and private. A few of the letters published in the *Times*, as well as some addressed to me personally, are discussed elsewhere in this book; but many of the latter went, after acknowledgment, into a large file labelled “Busybodies.” It would be amusing, but rather cruel, to give extracts from them. Incidentally, the article also led to several enquiries from friends—and even from perfect strangers—as to whether I hadn’t written it with my tongue in my cheek. A favourite gambit was, “What is your *real* opinion?”

I may be old-fashioned; but I cannot help regarding such enquiries as not far removed from insults. My output as a writer has been small and heterogeneous—still, I have published upwards of half a million words: I have never written a page of fiction: and I have never, in my life, printed a statement which I had not previously done my best to verify, or an opinion which I did not sincerely hold.

<sup>29</sup>The *Times*, Saturday, 9.xii.33.

## Expeditions

As already mentioned, the second half of December was marked by a fresh outburst of journalistic activity in the Loch Ness region. The *Daily Mail* expedition is deserving of particular mention on two grounds: its discovery of what was at first believed to be a “spoor” of the “monster,” but which later proved to have been planted, with malice aforethought, by some practical joker, and to have been made with a dried hippopotamus-foot<sup>30</sup>—and its subsequent vigorous championship of the plausible but inadequate theory that the “monster” was nothing more than a stray seal.

Other expeditions, designed to “capture or locate the monster” were planned—or, at least advertised.<sup>31</sup> I was paid—by a correspondent whose style inspired, if possible, less confidence than his address—the doubtful compliment of being invited to lead one. Here are some passages from his letter:

“... by arranging matters on a carefully planned basis a handsome profit on the enterprise can be earned, and at the same time a sincere effort will be made to afford interestants<sup>32</sup> the previously mentioned opportunities ... the enterprise promises to leave a handsome profit in the hands of the executives of the tour.

“On the other hand, if it were impossible for you to personally supervise the enterprise, may I solicit<sup>32</sup> whatever advise<sup>32</sup> you may be able to give me. ...”

I have not seen any Press accounts of the doings of such expeditions. No doubt the “interestants” proved unexpectedly shy. Possibly, also, the orders issued to the local police, early in December, to warn the public against attempting to molest or shoot the “monster” had a depressing effect upon the “executives.”

Nor have I heard anything more of the Alloa fishermen who, equipped with “serviceable ropes,” were confident of capturing the “monster,” but required “financial backing.”<sup>33</sup> Surely, someone might have put them in touch with Mr. Bertram Mills, whose altruistic of-

<sup>30</sup>Originally mounted, I believe, as an inkstand.

<sup>31</sup>E.g. *Daily Telegram*, 21.xii.33; *Evening Standard*, 15.xii.33.

<sup>32</sup>*Sic.*

<sup>33</sup>*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 4.i.34.

fer of £20,000<sup>34</sup> if the creature were delivered to his circus alive remains unclaimed (as does the £1,000 put up by Mr. G. Hope,<sup>35</sup> and the £5,000 offered by the New York Zoological Park<sup>36</sup>). A similar cloud hangs over the doings of the person who, for reasons best known to himself, offered to swim across Loch Ness “as a challenge to the Monster.”<sup>37</sup>

But this introduction is not intended to form a consecutive history of all activities, futile or otherwise, in connection with the Loch Ness creature. Such a task is best left to the Press. I have tried to give an outline of the circumstances which led to the writing of this book, and of my personal share in the collection of evidence. It is time to end this random chronicle, and to bring forward the evidence itself.

I must, however, pay a tribute to the enterprise of the *Illustrated London News*, whose special artist, Mr. George Davis, produced a series of valuable drawings based on the accounts of eye-witnesses<sup>38</sup> and also to that of the various photographers, amateur and professional, who succeeded in obtaining photographs of the “monster.”

In chronological order, the first of these (Plate I) was secured by Mr. Hugh Gray near Foyers, on November 12, 1933, at a distance of about 200 yards. It was reproduced in the *Daily Record and Mail* (6.xii.33) and various other papers. In at least one case, unfortunately, the vague outlines<sup>39</sup> of the original were extensively touched-up before reproduction—and the sceptically-minded were, I think, rather prejudiced in consequence against even untouched versions of the photograph. I see no real reason for this—to my mind the picture, although indefinite, is both interesting and undoubtedly genuine.

The second photograph (Plate II) is a still from a short film secured off Inverfarigaig on December 12, 1933, at a range of some 100 yards. The photographers were Messrs. Irvine, Clinton and Hay, of Scottish

<sup>34</sup>*Evening News*, 14.xii.33, and many other papers.

<sup>35</sup>*Daily Sketch*, 8.xii.33.

<sup>36</sup>*Evening Standard*, 11.v.34.

<sup>37</sup>*Glasgow News*, 8.xii.33.

<sup>38</sup>*Illustrated London News*, 13.i.34.

<sup>39</sup>The film was not removed from the camera for nearly three weeks; Mr. Gray considering that he had probably missed the creature altogether, and that the result would not be worth developing.



*(Untouched print.)*

PLATE I.—THE LOCH NESS MONSTER.

From a photograph by Mr. H. Gray.]

*[Daily Record and Mail.*

Film Productions Ltd. A reproduction of this still appeared in the *Times* (1.i.34) and various other papers.

The third photograph (Frontispiece) was taken off Invermoriston by Mr. R. K. Wilson, F.R.C.S., on April 1, 1934, at a range of 150–200 yards. It appeared in the *Daily Mail* (21.v.34); and, very naturally, created widespread interest. It is undoubtedly the most satisfactory and characteristic photograph of the three; but it must, in fairness, be remembered that to obtain any photograph of the “monster” requires not only great patience but—as I am sure Mr. Wilson would admit—a great share of good fortune.

Although the fitful interest taken in the matter by the London Press has once more subsided, excellent reports of the “monster” still appear, with regularity, in the *Scotsman*, *Inverness Courier* and *Northern Chronicle*. Some of these I have investigated by correspondence, and the results are incorporated in the general body of evidence which begins opposite.



## The Evidence in the Case

### Preliminary Note

It is, I think, the general impression that concrete evidence pointing to the existence of some unusual creature in Loch Ness first came to hand in the summer of 1933; and that any of earlier date may safely be dismissed as hearsay or vague tradition. Such is by no means the case. I have, for example, first-hand evidence of the same, or a very similar, creature having been observed in the Loch as long ago as 1872; again in 1903; and in various years from 1923 onwards to 1933—when the subject first aroused widespread attention, and when, in consequence, the reported sightings became more frequent.

Not improbably, the confirmed sceptic will attach a sinister meaning to the expression “in consequence.” He will contend—and, on the face of it, very reasonably—that the numerous sightings reported in 1933 were directly—or, at best, subconsciously—inspired by the éclat attaching to the publicity eagerly afforded by the Press, at that period, to any story of the kind. “When miracles are needed, miracles will occur.”

To my mind, this view—although containing an element of truth—is unwarranted and unjust. It omits several important factors. In the first place, although public opinion on the subject may have been over-credulous in the latter part of 1933, there is little doubt that before then it set quite the other way. Some cause must have operated to bring about the change; and while this may have been the simple love of the marvellous, it may equally have been—and, in my judgment, it was—the cumulative effect of reports, strange but consistent, honestly describing what a number of reputable witnesses had actually seen. And while it is true that “expectant attention” (to which I devote some space a little farther on) may be put forward as a complete solution of the undoubted fact that, in proportion, as more people looked for the “monster,” more people saw it, there is a simpler and more natural explanation of this occurrence.

Let me illustrate. Suppose that you live in the country, and that there is a small pond near-by, past which you occasionally walk. You have long been under the impression that it contains nothing larger than minnows, and the like—but one day, while passing it, you observe a comparatively large fish jumping. Thereafter, you will—consciously or subconsciously—be on the watch for indications of its presence; and the gleam of a white belly, or a sudden swirl in the water, will have a new meaning for you, since you know that the pond has at least one big fish in it. You may often have seen such slight indications in the past; but they conveyed nothing to your mind, since they were not cogent enough to overcome your preconception on the subject of the pond's inhabitants. Yet the big fish was there all the time—whether you, or anyone else, believed in its presence or not. And, having once seen it you would, as already pointed out, be the more ready to see it again—while, if you spoke of it to others (except, of course, in fishing circles) they would also be on the look-out for it; and, by so much, the more likely to observe signs of it.

Exactly the same argument applies in the case of the “monster.” Its *esse*, as Berkeley would have said, is *percipi*; if, when it gives an indication of its presence, no one is there to see this—or if, seeing it, he does not realise what it connotes—no sighting is, in any event, reported; and quite apart from any question of “expectant attention,” the creature is likely to be reported oftener in proportion as there are more persons in a position to see it, and with their minds prepared to apprehend indications of its presence. Such was the state of matters in 1933—and such was not, in general, the case earlier. And yet, as I have already remarked, there is a considerable amount of first-hand evidence which goes back a good many years.

After some consideration, I have decided to exclude from the main body of evidence all sightings before 1923, and to put the remainder on record first, for reference. In two cases—the statements of Mr. D. Mackenzie and Mr. F. Fraser—I regard the evidence itself as fully deserving of inclusion; but in view of the lapse of time—Mr. Mackenzie's sighting took place in 1871 (or 1872) and Mr. Fraser's in 1903—it is impossible to be sure that the creature which they saw was identical with that seen in the Loch in more recent years (and, so far as I know, there to-day). Some of the other accounts here prefixed are, admittedly, little more than rumours—and, for various reasons, I do not

regard any of them as carrying quite the same weight as those dating from 1923 and onwards.

I have neither the space nor the inclination to discuss such matters as a passage in Adamnan's *Life of Columba* (c. 700 A.D.) which narrates how a sacrilegious water-monster (*aquatilis bestia*) attacked one of Columba's companions when swimming across the River Ness (*fluvium Nesam*).<sup>40</sup> For the same reason, I omit more than a passing reference to the many long-standing traditions which people Loch Ness, and many other Highland lochs,<sup>41</sup> with "water-horses" and "water-bulls." Such tales are, no doubt, of great interest to students of folklore; but in the present instance I regard them as more or less beside the point—except in so far as they provide sceptics with excellent ground for contending that the stories of the "Loch Ness monster" are merely a temporary revival of an old and deep-rooted superstition.

But the following extract from a letter written to me on March 26, 1934, by Mr. D. Mackenzie, Caberfeidh, Balnain, can scarcely be put in that category.

"... I saw it about 1871 or 2, as near as I can remember now. I was on the rock above Abriachan, taking home bracken in October, when I saw what I took to be a log of wood coming across the Loch from Aldourie side. The water was very calm at the time.

"I expected it to go down the Loch towards the river<sup>42</sup> when it reached the middle of the Loch, however, it suddenly appeared to come to life, and seemed to me to look exactly like an upturned boat,<sup>43</sup> and went at great speed, wriggling and churning up the water, in the direction of Urquhart Castle.

"It was about 12 o'clock on a grand sunny day, so that it was impossible for me to be mistaken. It was an animal of some sort; and I have told this same story to my friends long before the present 'monster' became famous. ..."

<sup>40</sup> See the *Scotsman*, 20.x.33, and *Antiquity*, March 1934.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Arkaig, Lochy, Meiklie, Morar and Shiel. Also Loch-na-Beiste, Gairloch, whose Gaelic name signifies "The Lake of the Beast."

<sup>42</sup> The Ness.

<sup>43</sup> It will be noticed that many recent accounts of the "Loch Ness monster" describe its most usual aspect as being that of a single hump, looking like "an upturned boat." The rowing-boats used on the Loch are, I should judge, mostly built to one pattern

Accounts of Mr. Mackenzie's experience—or, possibly, of others like it—certainly appear to have been current at a somewhat later period. For example, Mr. D. Murray Rose remarks, in a recent letter to the *Scotsman*<sup>44</sup>:

“In the summer of 1885, stories were circulated about a strange beast being seen by many people about Loch Ness. It usually only appeared for a few minutes on the surface of the Loch, so that no one could properly describe it. ...”

The following account, relating to the year 1888 or thereabouts, is more specific.

(*Northern Chronicle*, 12.viii.33)

“... it appears that some forty-four years ago an Abriachan man, Alexander Macdonald, often saw a strange creature disporting itself on the loch in the early hours of the morning.

“Mr. Macdonald, who was a regular traveller on the Loch Ness mail steamer between Abriachan and Inverness, was often known to arrive at Abriachan Pier in a state of subdued excitement, and after having boarded the steamer he sometimes volunteered the information that he had seen the ‘salamander,’ as he called it.

“... It should be added that Mr. Macdonald died a good many years ago. ...”

The *Glasgow Herald* of 19.xii.33 mentions a somewhat similar story of the same period, or slightly earlier.

“Mr. (Roderick) Matheson<sup>45</sup> was part owner ... of the schooner *Bessie*, which frequently made passages from the West Coast to the East via the Caledonian Canal and, of course, Loch Ness. On one of these journeys Mr. Matheson, who was mate of the vessel, saw in Loch Ness what he described as ‘the biggest eel I ever saw in my life.’

“‘It had,’ he said, ‘a neck like a horse, and a mane somewhat similar.’”

—about 15 feet long, 4½–5 feet beam, ends rising about 2 feet 9 inches above the bottom of keel.

<sup>44</sup> 20.x.33.

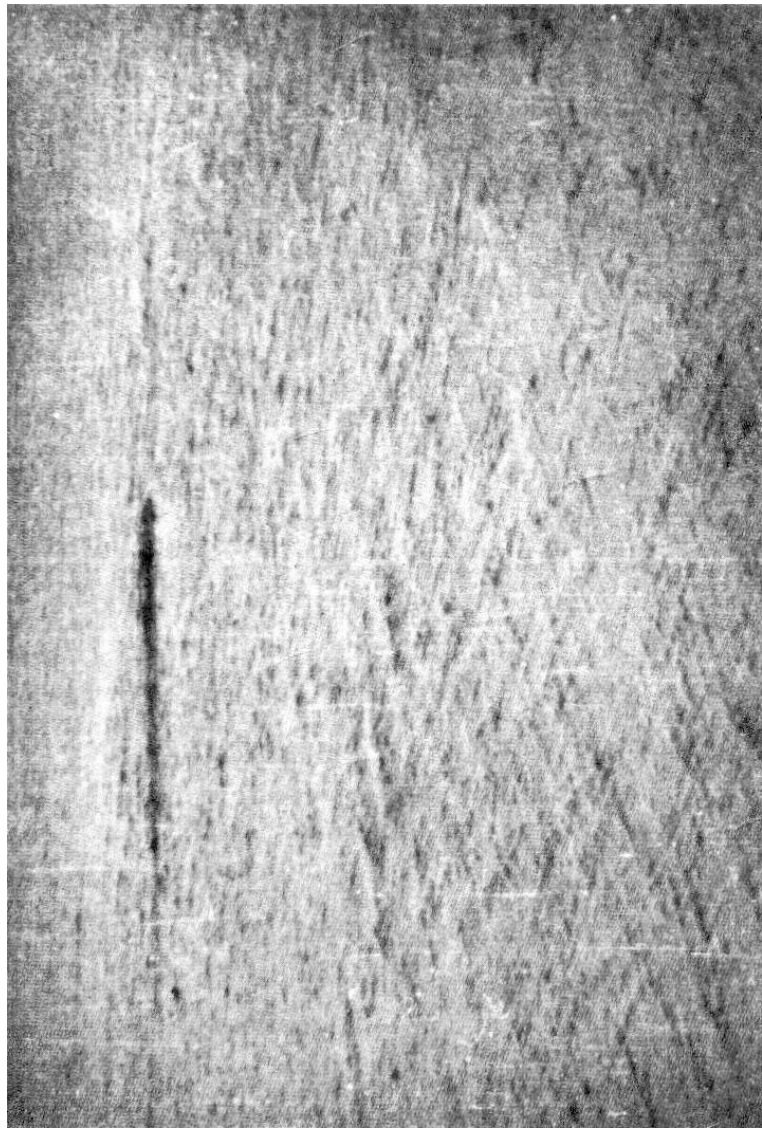


PLATE II.—THE LOCH NESS MONSTER.

[By courtesy of Wardour Films Ltd.

Again, the Duke of Portland, writing on November 10, 1933,<sup>46</sup> remarks:

“I should like to say that when I became in 1895, thirty-eight years ago, the tenant of the salmon angling in L. Oich and the River Garry, the forester, the hotel keeper and the fishing ghillies used often to talk about a ‘horrible great beastie’ as they called it which appeared in Loch Ness.”

Although interesting, such stories are of no great value as evidence. But the same cannot be said of a statement which I recently received from Mr. F. Fraser, Knockie.<sup>47</sup> One calm day in December 1903 he was rowing, in company with two other men, from Knockie Pier to Invermoriston. When about 400 yards from the Knockie shore, they noticed, about 250 yards away in the direction of Fort Augustus, an object on the surface which looked “like an upturned boat.” They rowed towards it, but got no nearer, and so desisted—they had to catch the steamer at Invermoriston. On their way back, they looked for it, but could find no trace of it. Mr. Fraser added that he had never seen a similar thing in Loch Ness before or since.

During my stay at Invermoriston (November 1933), I listened with much interest to a story told me by the oldest inhabitant, Mr. John Mcleod. Its effect was enhanced by the fact that I heard it related on the exact spot to which it referred—a ledge of rock at the foot of the lowest fall on the Moriston river, and overlooking a pool in which the river joins the waters of Loch Ness.

By Mr. Mcleod’s account, he was once standing on the ledge, about to begin fishing, when he noticed a huge creature lying in the water, flush with the surface, at the head of the pool. It remained motionless for some time—and so did he. Finally, he threw his line in its direction, and the creature made off.

He described it as being some 30–40 feet long, with a head like an eel and a long tapering tail. He could not remember the date, or even

<sup>45</sup> Mr. Matheson, who died some years ago, was a first cousin of Dr. Farquhar Matheson. See p. 185.

<sup>46</sup> To the Editor of the *Times*, for my information. A very similar letter appeared, over his signature, in the *Scotsman*, 20.x.33.

<sup>47</sup> I have paraphrased Mr. Fraser’s letter. I should have preferred to give it verbatim; but those unacquainted with the Highland idiom might find it rather difficult reading.

the year, of his adventure, but put it at “twenty to thirty years ago.” It is at least certain that many persons have heard him tell the story twenty years, and more, ago.<sup>48</sup>

Mr. D. Murray Rose, in his letter, also mentions that rumours of a strange creature in the Loch were again circulating in 1912; and a story which I heard at Fort Augustus falls to be classified as much more than a rumour. Unfortunately it is at second-hand, and the original narrator is dead.

It was told me by Mr. Kenneth Mackay, Inverness., During the War, Mr. Mackay was in charge of the Drumnadrochit Hotel. The incident took place within that period, but he could not fix its date more precisely. One evening the late James Cameron, head-keeper of Balmacan, who had been out fishing on Loch Ness, came into the hotel with his face as white as paper, and asked Mr. Mackay to give him some brandy. He had obviously had a severe shock, but would not say what it was.

When he got up to go home, Mr. Mackay (who knew him well) proposed to accompany him for part of the way—and, after some persuasion, Cameron told him what had happened; but only on his undertaking to say nothing of it in the neighbourhood, for fear of ridicule. Cameron’s story was, that while he was fishing an “enormous animal” had suddenly come to the surface quite close to his boat. The sudden shock caused him to faint, or at least go dizzy—and when he came to himself he was sprawling at the bottom of the boat, and there was no sign of the creature. He rowed to shore as quickly as possible. No persuasion would induce him to amplify his account. He died some years ago.

A curious feature of the incident remains to be told. When accounts of the “monster” began to circulate in the summer of 1933, Mr. Mackay remained entirely sceptical; until, one day, he suddenly recalled the story which Cameron had told him, and which had entirely passed from his mind.

So much by way of preliminary; and now for the main body of evidence.

<sup>48</sup> Mr. J. McC. Robertson heard him tell it about 1908 (*Weekly Scotsman*, 10.ii.34) and Mr. C. W. W. Broun in 1910 (*the Times*, 13.xii.33).

The methods pursued when collecting this have already been described (p. 10). On my return, I went carefully through my fair notes, putting the various sightings in chronological order and bringing the details of each case into more or less systematic arrangement. I then typed out the notes of each separate sighting, and sent a copy to the witness or witnesses, with a request that it might be read through, amended for any mis-statements and/or omissions, and returned. The results form the basis of this chapter.

Other portions of the evidence have been obtained, by correspondence, from witnesses whom I was unable to interview—either because (as in the case of Mr. Morrison—23*b*) they were no longer in this country when I began my investigation, or because I only heard of their experiences after I had left Loch Ness. In such cases, the fact of the evidence being given by letter, and not in an interview, is distinctly stated. In general, such letters have been explicit enough to remove any need for further enquiries on my part—although I have always made these whenever I thought them necessary.

On the whole, I consider that the texts of evidence given in this chapter are not far from representing what the witnesses would have deposed if they had been requested to make sworn statements; a proceeding which, for obvious reasons, I did not suggest—my enquiry being quite unofficial.

It will be noticed that, in several cases, reference is made to the question of “expectant attention.” Broadly speaking, it is undoubtedly true that, if you are consciously or unconsciously expecting to see something, and are sufficiently favoured by circumstances, the chances are that you will ultimately come to imagine that you see it. This result may come about as a pure effort of imagination; but, more probably, you will graft on to some object which you really see the qualities and appearance of the thing which you are expecting to see.<sup>49</sup>

While collecting evidence, I never allowed myself to lose sight of this factor; and I am satisfied that in most cases it did not affect the observers’ judgment to any material extent. That is to say, that while it would be ridiculous to imagine that they had never previously heard anything about the “monster” at the time when they saw it,<sup>50</sup> yet on

<sup>49</sup> For some instances of this, on Loch Ness itself, see pp. 93, 96.

<sup>50</sup> This was, however, actually the case with one witness. See p. 38.



almost every occasion it was seen unexpectedly—when the witnesses were not expecting to see it, and not thinking about it. It was unnecessary to stress this point in each individual case; but I have occasionally referred to it whenever this seemed relevant—and in every instance where, so far as I could discover, a state of “expectant attention” did exist, I have naturally drawn attention to this.

It is proper for me to remark here that, while I have never—I am glad to say—been compelled to discard the evidence of any witness because I distrusted it, I have omitted *in toto*, after full reflection, one or two of the statements which I collected; either because they seemed too vague to be of any service, or because the possibility existed that what was seen was not the “monster.” Again, I have occasionally omitted a point of detail which appeared to me to be the product of after-thought, or imagination, and not of observation. Subject to these reservations—which represent that part of my “personal equation” which I have not been able to eliminate, and which do not apply to at least 95 percent of the statements—I have given, in full, the body of evidence which I obtained: and even when (as in one instance<sup>51</sup>) the statements of two companion witnesses are, to some extent, conflicting I have not modified either.

Less space is, naturally, occupied by those statements which describe the creature as having been seen in its “one-hump” aspect than by those which contain details of its head, neck, etc. It may be pointed out that while, at first reading, the various descriptions of its appearance differ very widely, the discrepancies are actually more apparent than real; and that, as I hope to show, such as remain after full examination, are of considerable service in identifying it—or, at least, in determining its type.

Personally, I have little doubt that one and the same creature—a living creature, far larger than any normal inhabitant of the Loch waters—was seen in every instance detailed here; and I may point out that there is nothing in the evidence to support the view that there is more than one creature of the kind in Loch Ness. Direct proof of this theory—the simultaneous sighting of two creatures by the same witness—is entirely absent; and indirect proof—such as would be af-

<sup>51</sup> See pp. 48, 49.

forded if two witnesses had reported seeing it at the same, or almost the same, time, in two places far apart—is also lacking.<sup>52</sup>

The evidence has been arranged chronologically. Each occasion on which the creature was sighted has been given a serial number; and if it was seen more than once on the same day the sightings are distinguished by suffixes, thus—23*a*. The data are given in the following order:

Date. Place of sighting.

Time of day. Weather.

Name of witness (-es) affording the evidence.<sup>53</sup>

Details of what was seen.

All statements of fact are on the personal authority of the witnesses, and passages within inverted commas reproduce their own words. My own comments are enclosed in brackets. When a witness has seen the creature more than once, this is noted in parentheses, thus—(*first sighting*). (P.) after a witness's name indicates that the evidence was obtained at a personal interview; (L.), that it was communicated in a letter.

To avoid the incessant repetition of such phrases as “the monster,” or “the creature,” this has been generally designated, throughout the evidence, as X.

1. May 1923. Off Abriachan Pier.

(*Date*, about May 10.) *Time*, 7:30 a.m. *Weather*, sun shining, air clear, Loch quite calm.

*Witness*, Mr. Wm. Miller, Keeper, Craigellachie. (L.)

Mr. Miller, in company with James McGillivray (deceased), saw X from the Dores-Stratherrick Road at a point eastward of Balnafoich.

<sup>52</sup> It may, however, be noted that on October 22, 1933, it was seen opposite Glendoe about 11:30 a.m., off Altsigh (6 miles away) about 12:15 p.m., and again opposite Glendoe about an hour later. But while these sightings suggest—a suggestion borne out by other evidence—that the creature is a fast swimmer, they do not necessarily do more.

A report of two “monsters” being seen simultaneously appeared (a year after the event) in the *Daily Record and Mail*, 10.v.34. It does not, to my mind, carry very much weight.

<sup>53</sup> Other witnesses (if any), from whom information was not directly obtained, are noted among the details.

When first sighted, it was lying on the surface off Abriachan Pier, and looked like “an upturned boat.” It then began to move, describing “fully three parts of a circle,” and finally sank. “When moving it went slowly, but we could see a ripple leaving its fore part.” It was in view from 8 to 10 minutes, showing 10–12 feet of its length, which looked dark in colour.

He had previously heard “tales” about X, and his wife saw a very similar object in Dores Bay in July 1914.

[At the time, her account was not taken seriously; but he now has no doubt that both of them saw “the same beast.” Mr. Miller puts his distance from X at “a good mile”; from the 6-inch Ordnance sheet, I make it not far short of a mile and a half.]

2. August 1929. Near Abriachan Pier.

(*Date*, not noted.) *Time*, about 9:30 a.m. *Weather*, clear, sun shining, Loch very calm.

*Witness*, Mrs. Cumming, Upper Knockbain. (L.)<sup>54</sup>

Mrs. Cumming, in company with her cousin, D. McGillivray and her aunt [now dead] saw X from much the same spot as Mr. Miller [1]. It was close to the shore at a point some 300 yards north-eastward of Abriachan Pier, and remained motionless for some ten minutes, after which it sank with a noticeable splash.

Viewed through a telescope [power not stated] it was “black, or dark at any rate” in colour, and showed as a large hump, resembling a horse’s body in bulk.

3. July 21, 1930. Off Tor Point, Dores Bay.

*Time*, about 7:30 p.m. (broad daylight.) *Weather*, calm— evening of a very hot, sunny day.

*Witness*, Mr. Ian J. Milne, Inverness. (P.)

Mr. Milne was fishing from a boat off Tor Point, in company with two friends.<sup>55</sup> (Fig. 2.)

His attention was drawn to the point A by the sound of a loud splash. Looking in that direction, he saw spray being flung into the air.

<sup>54</sup> This information was obtained at the suggestion, and with the help, of the Rev. William Ewen, of Knockbain North Manse, to whom my acknowledgments are due.

<sup>55</sup> Messrs. R. C. M. Macdougall and G. D. Gallon, both of Inverness. They concur with Mr. Milne’s account of their joint experience.

[He was not in the least expecting to hear or see anything unusual in the Loch.]

He then made out the bow-wave of something moving at considerable speed, and roughly following the track shown in the figure. At its nearest approach to the boat, it was a little less than 300 yards away, and he then estimated its speed at 14-15 knots. On reaching point B, it slowly submerged, and disappeared. [By calculation, it must have been visible for about three and a half minutes.]

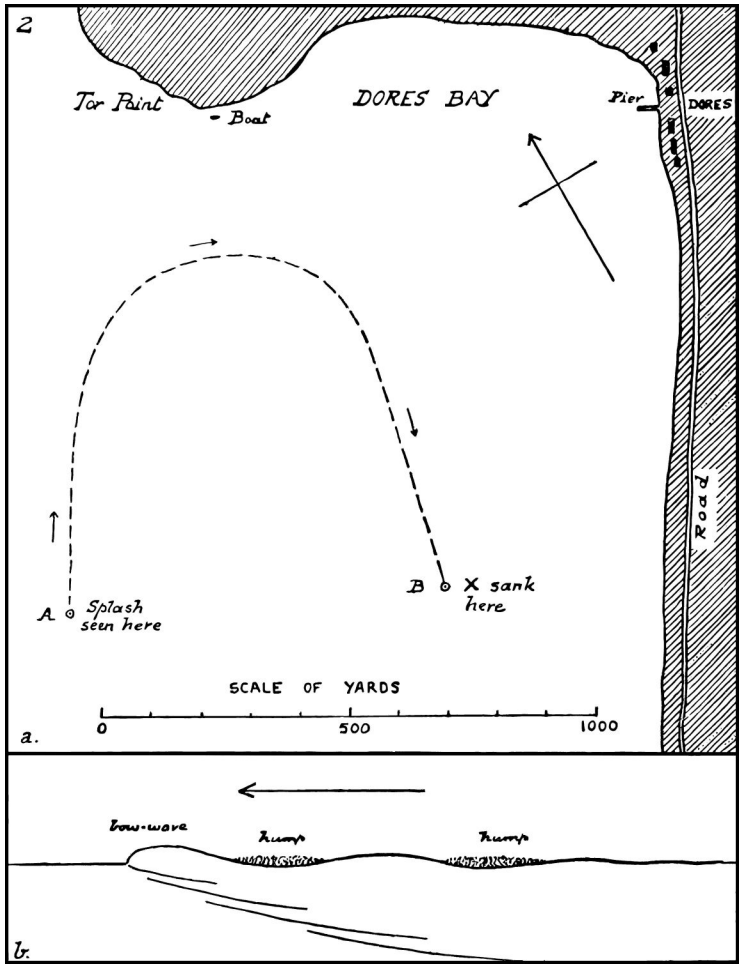


Fig. 2.—MR. MILNE'S SKETCH AND TRACK-CHART.

The wash of the bow-wave was powerful enough to rock the boat from side to side. At its apex, the wave stood 2 feet or so above the surface. He saw no head or tail, but caught glimpses of a dark back,

appearing as two or three shallow humps. These had a motion similar to that of a caterpillar—an undulation which appeared to travel along the back of the creature itself. Apart from this peculiar motion, he would have compared what he saw to an enormous conger-eel. It gave him the impression of being very long in proportion to its girth—"length without breadth"—and of being propelled by a tail, not by flippers. He estimated the length of the portion he saw—which was not the extreme length, as he did not see a definite head or tail—at about 22 feet.

[He told me that he had never seen a whale, but had often seen seals and otters when swimming. He was quite certain that this was neither.

An account of his experience appeared in the *Northern Chronicle* of August 27, 1930. No names were mentioned in it—Mr. Milne has a business in Inverness, and did not wish to be thought self-advertising.]

4. February 7, 1932. Off Strone Point.

*Time*, about 4 p.m. *Weather*, fine and sunny, Loch quite calm.

*Witness*, Mr. James Cameron, postman, Fort Augustus (*first sighting*). (P.)

Mr. Cameron was travelling towards Fort Augustus on a motor-bus, and caught sight of a dark-coloured object, which he at first thought was an upturned boat, drifting off Strone Point, about 300 yards from shore. He turned himself round, and kept it in view for some minutes. It ultimately sank and disappeared.

[To this period—February 1932—belongs the account of a curious creature seen in the River Ness by Miss K. MacDonald, Inverness. While it is of considerable interest as bearing upon the general question of access to and from the Loch via the Ness, I cannot see my way to including it in the main evidence, since I am far from satisfied that what Miss MacDonald saw was X. Early Press reports<sup>56</sup> of her experience credited her with stating that the creature which she saw was some 12–15 feet long, held its head two to three feet above water, and had two large tusks. In a letter to myself, Miss MacDonald disavowed these statements, but commended the accuracy of a later report in the

<sup>56</sup> E.g. *Bulletin* (Glasgow) and *Glasgow Herald*, 13.xii.33.

*Daily Mail*.<sup>57</sup> From this, it appears that what she saw was about 6–8 feet in total length, with a very short neck and long, toothed jaws. It was making its way up river towards the Holm Mills weir, some 300 yards away. She spoke of it as a “crocodile”—and certainly her account rather suggests one. Whatever the thing may have been, I do not connect it with the Loch Ness creature—nor does Miss MacDonald, who saw X two years later.<sup>58</sup>]

5. April 14, 1933. Off Aldourie.

*Time*, about 3 p.m. *Weather*, sun shining brightly, Loch absolutely calm (showing reflections of clouds).

*Witness*, Mrs. Mackay, Drumnadrochit. (P.)

Mrs. Mackay and her husband were driving from Inverness to Drumnadrochit. At a point of the road almost opposite Aldourie Pier [which is on the other side of the Loch] Mrs. Mackay caught sight of a violent commotion in the water near-by, about 100 yards from shore. She thought at first that it was caused by two ducks fighting; but on reflection it seemed far too extensive to be caused in this way.

The commotion subsided, and a big wake became visible, apparently caused by something large moving along just below the surface. This wake went away across the Loch towards Aldourie Pier.

Then, about the middle of the Loch [some 450 yards from her], the cause of the wake emerged, showing as two black humps moving in line—the rear one somewhat the larger (fig. 3).

The rear hump appeared first, and Mrs. Mackay took it for a whale on account of its blue-black colour [she has often seen whales at sea]. The two humps moved with the forward-rolling motion of a whale or porpoise, but always remained smooth in outline, exhibiting no traces of fins. They rose and sank in an undulating manner [as if sliding along a submerged switchback] but never went entirely out of sight. Mrs. Mackay estimated the overall length of the two humps at about 20 feet.

X, after rising, continued to move towards the pier for some distance. Then it turned sharply to port and, after describing a half-circle, sank suddenly with considerable commotion.

<sup>57</sup> 29.xii.33.

<sup>58</sup> See her account, No. 42, p. 80.

[Mr. Mackay, who was driving the car, only stopped in time to see the final commotion, and a noticeable “wash” which came rolling on to the shore after X had sunk.

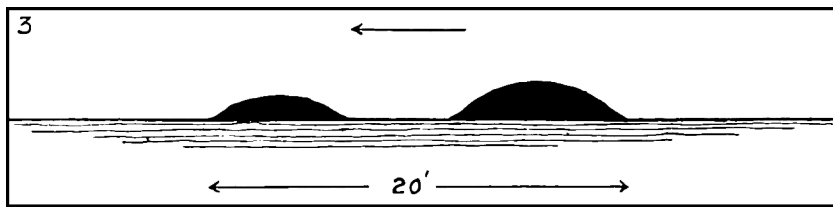


Fig. 3.—X AS SEEN BY MRS. MACKAY

An account of Mrs. Mackay's experience appeared in the *Inverness Courier*, 2.v.33. No names were mentioned—like Mr. Milne, Mrs. Mackay wished to avoid the suggestion of self-advertisement. Her husband is proprietor of the Drumnadrochit Hotel.]

6. (About) May 11, 1933. Off Whitefield.

*Time*, between 5 and 6 p.m. *Weather*, mild and calm, surface of Loch looking “black.” Sun not shining. Occasional showers.

*Witnesses*, Mr. Alexander Shaw, of Whitefield, and his son, Mr. Alister Shaw. (Both P.)

Mr. Shaw and his son were standing in front of their house at Whitefield [it is about 150 feet above the Loch, and overlooks it].

Mr. Alex. Shaw first noticed a “wave” in the water, such as might have been made by a boat. X then came to the surface, about 300 yards from shore, and some 500 from the observers, moving rather faster than a rowing-boat, and heading towards Urquhart Bay [on the opposite side of the Loch]. It remained in view, he considers, for five to six minutes [his son thinks, for 2 or 3]. A shower came on; and this, together with a flaw of wind striking the water, confused the view. When the weather cleared, X was no longer to be seen.

Its appearance, by Mr. Alex. Shaw's account, is shown in fig. 4, which was drawn under his inspection. The portion above water looked like a large dark hump, about 8 feet long. At the rear was a big wash, like that made by an outboard-engine motor-boat. Some distance in front of the hump, he could see something undulating up and down, but never quite breaking the surface.

His son described X as looking, in general, rather like a floating log.

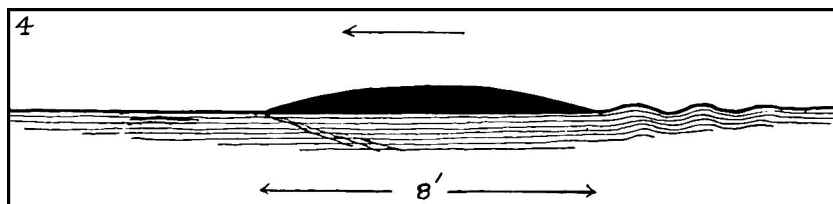


Fig. 4.—X AS SEEN BY MR. ALEX SHAW.

[Mr. Alex. Shaw informed me that he had often seen whales, and also seals. This was certainly neither—he had never seen anything quite like it.]

7. May 27, 1933. Near Invermoriston.

*Time*, not recollected. *Weather*, sunny, a slight ripple on the water.

*Witnesses*, Mr. J. Simpson, Altsigh (*first sighting*). (P.)

Mrs. J. Simpson, Altsigh (*first sighting*). (P.)

Mr. and Mrs. Simpson were on the road between Invermoriston and Altsigh, at a point about a mile from the former. X rose, with a loud splash, out in the Loch at a point roughly opposite them, and about 450 yards away. It showed as two humps, like a pair of upturned boats in line with a space between them, and moved rapidly down the Loch towards Dochfour. It remained in sight for about ten minutes. Its wash broke on the shore.

[I insert here a summary of information about X which I received from Mr., Mrs. and Miss H. McLennan, of Temple Pier, Drumnadrochit. They told me that they had frequently seen X, but could not definitely date their experiences. Several other witnesses, by the way, experienced the same difficulty—which, after all, is natural enough.]

Mr. McLennan put X's length at about 30 feet, and was of opinion that it had four flippers—this, I gathered, was merely his impression.

Mrs. McLennan said that she had several times seen X, the first occasion being in the last week of May or the first of June 1933. Except on one occasion, described later, when she saw it *on shore*,<sup>59</sup> it exhibited two humps, and afforded occasional glimpses of its head,

<sup>59</sup> See p. 42.



neck and tail. The head, when seen, was carried 3 feet or more above water; and the humps were not so prominent when X was moving as when it was at rest. She described the neck as tapering slightly from the water upwards, and the head as being not much larger than the neck immediately below it. The colour of head, neck and humps was dark. An appearance of hair—or “wool,” as she termed it—showed at the back of the neck. The tail resembled that of a fish. She observed X, on one occasion, to shake its head on bringing it clear of the water.

Miss H. McLennan made me a rough sketch of X. Using this as a basis, I produced, under the witnesses' instruction, a drawing almost exactly resembling Miss Howden's sketch (fig. 15).

8. July 15, 1933. Off Altsigh.

*Time*, not recollected. *Weather*, sunny, Loch absolutely calm.

*Witness*, Mr. J. Simpson, Altsigh (*second sighting*). (P.)

Mr. Simpson<sup>60</sup> was near the Half-Way House Altsigh, and saw X in the middle of the Loch, distant about 700 yards. It showed as a single dark-coloured hump, and remained motionless on the surface for about ten minutes, finally sinking.

9. July 22, 1933. Near Whitefield.

*Time*, 3:30–4 p.m. *Weather*, fine.

*Witnesses*, Mr. G. Spicer, Temple Gardens, N.W.11. (P.)

Mrs. Spicer. (P.)

[In view of the extraordinary nature of what was seen by Mr. and Mrs. Spicer—the creature which they saw was not in the Loch at all, but crossed the road in front of their car—a few preliminary remarks may be useful; particularly since the incident originally found its way into print in a rather incorrect form, and with one or two misleading details.

On August 4, 1933, a letter from Mr. Spicer appeared in the *Inverness Courier*. It stated that on July 22, while he was motoring along the east side of Loch Ness, and about half-way between Dores and

<sup>60</sup> Mr. Simpson mentioned that three other men were with him, but did not give their names. As X was only seen motionless, in the “one-hump” aspect, I did not think it necessary to obtain additional statements.

Foyers, something like a “prehistoric animal” crossed the road about 50 yards ahead. It seemed to have a long neck, which moved up and down in the manner of a scenic railway, and the body was fairly big with a high back.” He added, that its length was “from 6–8 feet,” and that it appeared to be “carrying a small lamb or animal of some kind.”

Like (I imagine) most other readers of this letter, I considered that it was either a pleasantry or a rather unconvincing attempt at a hoax; and I saw no reason, while at Loch Ness, to change that opinion. But on my return I visited Mr. and Mrs. Spicer and heard their story—and I became, and remain, convinced that it was entirely *bona fide*; that they had undergone a most unusual experience which had left a lasting and rather unpleasant impression. I now give their accounts, deferring further comment.]

They were motoring round Loch Ness in their [open] 12-h.p. Austin, having been as far as John o’ Groats and back via Inverness. Mr. Spicer was driving, and his wife was in the other front seat.

They had passed through Dores, and were on their way towards Foyers [he is not certain whether they had passed Whitefield] when, as the car was climbing a slight rise, an extraordinary-looking creature crossed the road ahead of them, from left to right, in a series of jerks. When on the road, it took up practically the whole width of it.

He saw no definite head, but this was across the road before he had time to take the whole thing in properly—it was only in sight for a few seconds. The creature was of a loathsome-looking greyish colour, “like a dirty elephant or a rhinoceros.” It had a very long and thin neck, which undulated up and down, and was contorted into a series of half-hoops. The body was much thicker, and moved across the road, as already stated, in a series of jerks. He saw no indications of any legs, or of a tail—but in front of the body, where this sloped down to the neck, he saw something “flopping up and down” which, on reflection, he thought might have been the end of a long tail swung round to the far side of the body. The latter stood some 4–5 feet above the road. The whole looked like “a huge snail with a long neck.”

Under his direction, I made a sketch (fig. 5).

The road is some 12 feet, or more, in width,<sup>61</sup> and there is a grassy verge on either side. On the Loch side, there is then a low bank, and

<sup>61</sup>Two cars can pass on it comfortably.

a short slope on the far side of this goes down to the water—which would not be more than 40 feet, or so, from the road. On the other side of the road there is a sloping bank, down which the creature must have come.

The view of the Loch at this point, unfortunately, is somewhat obscured by trees fringing its shore; and when the car reached the point at which the creature had crossed the road, Mr. Spicer could not

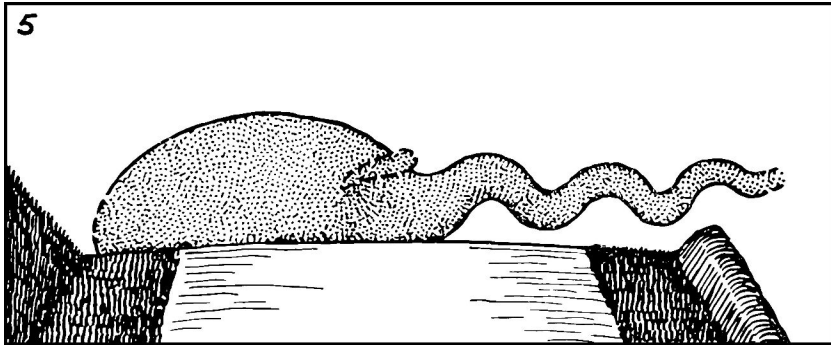


Fig. 5.—CREATURE SEEN BY MR. SPICER.

see whether the water was disturbed. He heard no splash—but considers that this would, in any event, have been covered by the noise of the car.

At the time, he had never heard of the “monster”: but he learned of it from the first person he spoke to, soon afterwards—a road-man, on a bicycle.

Mrs. Spicer’s account [which I noted independently] was in general agreement with her husband’s. She considered that, when first seen, the creature was about 200 yards ahead. On the upper side of the body, at the point where the neck began, she saw something which she took to be the head and neck of some smaller animal—for example, a young deer [her husband, as already stated, considers it may have been the end of a long tail].

They did not stop, but slowed down as they came to the spot where the creature crossed. The grass at this point looked trampled down,

and there was a “sort of a track” on the bank which rises up from the road on the side away from the Loch.<sup>62</sup>

[It will be noted that the original suggestion that the creature was carrying “a small lamb or other animal” was based upon an appearance for which there is another—and, to my mind, a much more probable—explanation.

With regard to the second principal discrepancy between this account and Mr. Spicer’s original letter—the estimated size of the creature—Mr. Spicer, writing to me recently, pointed out that his original letter was written in “haste and an endeavour not to exaggerate,” and that the length of 6–8 feet, which he then gave, was an under-estimate. He continues:

“After having ascertained the width of the road, and giving the matter mature thought in every way, I *afterwards* came to the conclusion that the creature I saw must have been at least 26 feet<sup>63</sup> in length.”

While discussing his experience, I happened to refer to the diplodocus-like dinosaur in *King Kong*: a film which, I discovered, we had both seen. He told me that the creature he saw much resembled this, except that in his case no legs were visible, while the neck was much longer and more flexible.]

10a. August 5, 1933. Off Inchnacardoch Bay.

*Time*, 2–3 p.m. *Weather*, very fine and sunny, surface of Loch like glass.

*Witness*, Miss N. Smith, Fort Augustus. (P.)

Miss Smith was walking down the drive from Glendoe House on her way to Fort Augustus, and caught sight of X some distance outside the entrance to Inchnacardoch Bay. It crossed over from there towards the pier below Glendoe, occasionally turning in circles and then con-

<sup>62</sup> Although Mr. Spicer and Mr. Shaw (the road contractor for the Dores district) have given me much valuable help, I have not succeeded in determining the exact spot. It may have been any of several places, all much alike in their general features.

<sup>63</sup> By a printer’s error, the *Sunday Times* of December 17, 1933, reporting an account which Mr. Spicer broadcast of his adventure, credited him with saying that the creature was “about 300 feet long.” This was duly corrected to “30 feet” in the following issue.

tinuing on its way. While circling, it caused much commotion in the water—not so at other times. Eventually it sank, and did not reappear.

It showed above water as a single dark-coloured hump, the size of an ordinary rowing-boat or somewhat larger.

[At its nearest, it was probably 1,000 yards from her.]

10b. August 5, 1933. In Inchnacardoch Bay.

*Time*, between 3 and 5 p.m. *Weather*, as above.

*Witnesses*, Miss P. Keyes, Shettleston, Glasgow. (P.)

Eng.-Comdr. R. A. R. Meiklem, R.N. (ret.), Fort

Augustus. (P.) Mrs. Meiklem. (P.)

On the afternoon of the same day, X was seen in Inchnacardoch Bay (see fig. 6) by three witnesses. The first person to see it there was Miss Keyes, who was out on the rocks at the back of Comdr. Meiklem's house [she was visiting a friend, one of the house staff].

Some time after 3 p.m. she noticed, on the N.W. side of Cherry Island, something which she at first took for a small boat, plying to and fro in the bay. Discovering by its movements that it was not a boat, she watched it more attentively. It was dark-brown, or black, in colour [she thinks, brown; but the strong sunlight, and the distance of the object—about 750 yards—made this point difficult to determine]. It looked “big,” but she could not make out its shape definitely.

She watched it for some little time, and then went into the house. After an interval, she incidentally mentioned to her friend what she had seen. Later still, about 4:30 p.m., Mrs. Meiklem came to hear of it; and she and her husband went down to a point on the road overlooking the bay, taking with them a pair of binoculars [power about 6,<sup>64</sup> definition good]. The distance from their view-point to X (which did not move while they watched it) was approximately 740 yards. Comdr. Meiklem had X in view for about three minutes. Mrs. Meiklem watched it for a few seconds, and they then attempted to get a closer view. While doing so, their view was obstructed by intervening trees; and when they could again see the spot in which they had first sighted it, X had disappeared.

<sup>64</sup> I.e. through the binoculars they had much the same view of it as they would have had with the naked eye at 150 yards.

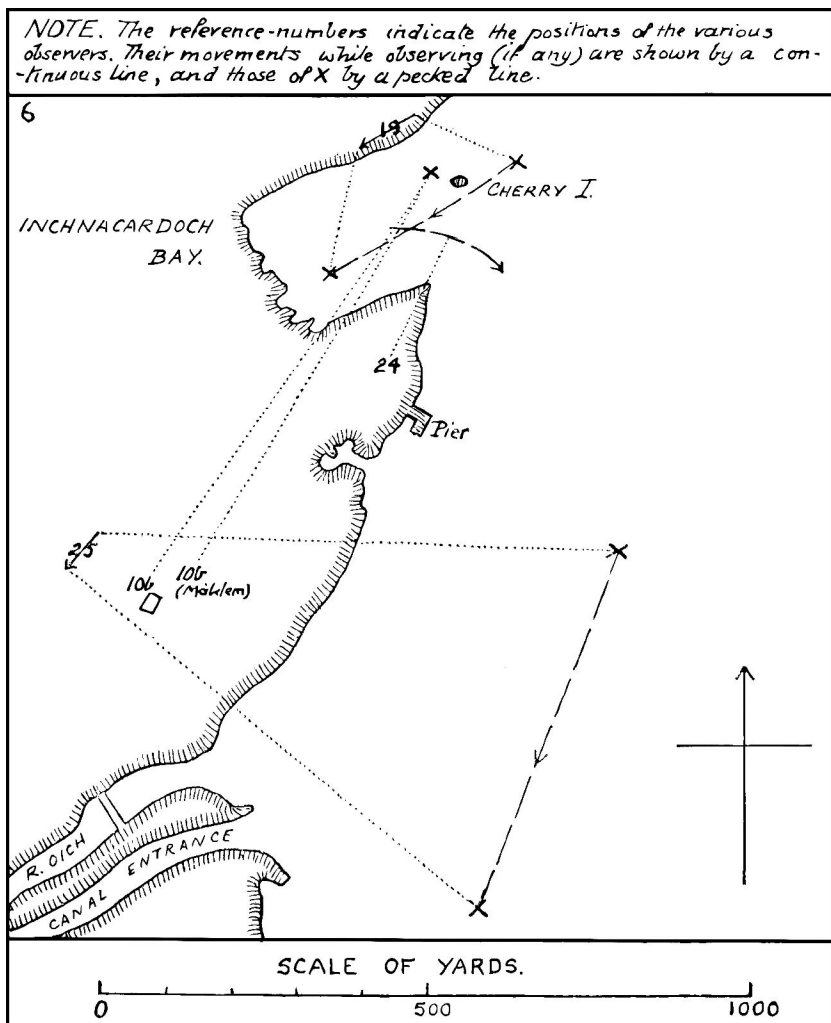


Fig. 6.—VARIOUS SIGHTINGS NEAR INCHNACARDOCH BAY.

While in view, X was end-on, with the rear end towards them, in about 4-6 feet of water. Fig. 7 is based upon a sketch made by

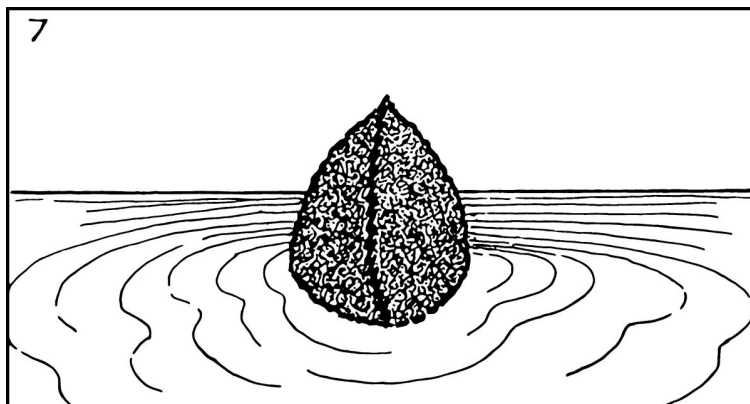


Fig. 7.—COMDR. MEIKLEM'S SKETCH.

Comdr. Meiklem—elaborated, with his concurrence, to show one or two points which he observed, but did not put in. The part of X showing above water suggested a body the size of a large cart-horse, and was blackish-grey in colour. There was a high ridge along the back, which appeared to taper down—the stern of the creature did not round off as that of a horse would. The ridge was not quite straight, suggesting that the body was curved round a little. The skin was “knobby and warted,” like that of a great toad. It had a “granulated” appearance—not as if covered with scales, but more resembling the local granite rocks. The ridge was blacker than the rest of the carcass—it had no motion, and did not look like a fin, but appeared to be an integral part of the body. The latter's sides met the water perpendicularly, or nearly so. Mrs. Meiklem's observations were similar.

11. (First week in) August 1933. Near Whitefield.

*Time*, not recollected. *Weather*, stormy.

*Witness*, Mrs. T. McLennan. (P.)

Mrs. McLennan and her husband were walking, towards their boat, along the Loch-side road between Whitefield and Foyers. [In this neighbourhood, which was also the scene of Mr. and Mrs. Spicer's adventure, there are several small, flat beaches from which the Loch shore proper rises in a more or less steep slope, while the road is cut out of these slopes and overlooks the water at a height of some 20-50

feet.] Mrs. McLennan saw X, resting close to the water's edge, on one of these beaches.

She could not identify the exact spot further than by saying that from it Urquhart Castle would be in a line with Temple Pier. [This line of bearing runs N. 8° W.—S. 8° E., true, and meets the S.E. shore of the Loch at a point about 2½ miles from Whitefield, towards Foyers.]

She was greatly surprised to see what she took to be X out of the water [as already mentioned,<sup>65</sup> she had seen it in the Loch more than once]. She had little more than a glimpse of it—she called to her husband, and at the sound of her voice X plunged clumsily into the Loch, sending up a big splash. Mr. McLennan was too late to see anything but this splash.

She described X as lying “hunched-up,” end-on to her, its head towards the water but “thrown back.” The back looked “ridged, something like an elephant's,” and was of much the same colour, but had several humps on it. These were not so pronounced as those she had noticed when it was in the water. It did not stand very high off the beach. She estimated its length, hunched-up as it was, at 25 feet [pacing this off, when she gave me her account, along the wall fronting her cottage].

12. August 11, 1933. Near Urquhart Castle.

*Time*, 7–8 a.m. *Weather*, very fine and calm.

*Witness*, Mr. A. H. Palmer, A.M.I.E.E. (L.)

[The following passages are taken from a letter written to me by Mr. Palmer. During a business trip, he spent the night of August 10, 1933, in his saloon car near the shore of the Loch at a point some 2 miles from Urquhart Castle on the way towards Altsigh. It was a very still, warm night.]

“... about 7 a.m. ... I heard a sudden and tremendous rushing of the water. It sounded as though a gale of wind had suddenly struck the surface of the Loch, but I observed that not a leaf stirred on the nearby bushes and there was no wind. I ran down to the edge of the water and found it in commotion for about 200 yards each way and it was coming in on the shingle in what might be termed

<sup>65</sup> See p. 35.



small waves or large ripples. The whole area of the Loch for about 400 yards was in turmoil.

“Nothing was visible to account for it, but looking south I saw what appeared to be a smooth dark wake extending down the centre of the Loch as far as the eye could follow. It was impossible for any sort of boat to have passed in the short time it took me to get to the water edge; and, being an engineer, I could only imagine there must be some sort of geyser below, which built up its pressure until it reached a value high enough to break through. Against that was the fact that the disturbance was too uniform over too large an area. I was frankly puzzled. ...

“I returned to the car, and about an hour later went down to see how things were going. The water was tolerably calm but still not smooth; and about 100 yards out I saw a flat head on the surface which appeared like a very shallow inverted bowl and almost black in colour. At each side I saw a short antenna which I can best describe as being like the horns on the head of a snail. Between them was a wide mouth opening and closing at about two-second intervals. The width of the mouth I should estimate at about 12–18 inches, and it opened to the extent of about 6 inches.

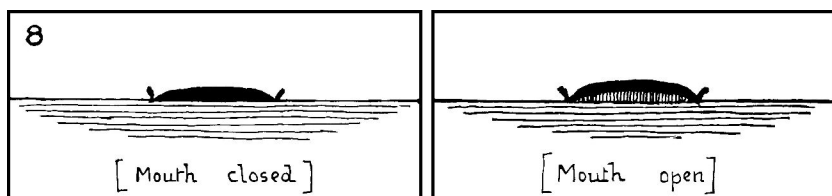


Fig. 8.—MR. PALMER'S SKETCH.

“It appeared to be steadily breathing or basking on the surface of the water, and remained so for at least half an hour, gradually drifting in a south-easterly direction towards the far bank. Unfortunately, my duties prevented me remaining there. ...

“My own conclusion is that there definitely is in the Loch some very large creature; it must be enormous to account for the disturbance of such a large area of water. There can be no question of hallucination, as engineers are too practical, I think. ...”

[I asked Mr. Palmer to let me have, if possible, a sketch of the head. He sent one (fig. 8), but remarked that he was “an exceedingly poor

hand at sketching.” In a note on the sketch, he added that the interior of the mouth appeared red, much the same in colour as the human mouth.]

13. August 1933 (date uncertain).<sup>66</sup> Off Invermoriston.

*Time*, about 2:30 p.m. *Weather*, calm, very clear, no wind, sun shining.

*Witness*, Mr. G. McQueen, A.A. Scout, Fort Augustus. (*First sighting*.) (P.)

Mr. McQueen, who is the A.A. road-scout for the district, was on the road between Invermoriston and Fort Augustus at a point not far from Invermoriston Pier, and saw X, at 500–600 yards range, off the mouth of the Moriston river. It was exhibiting the “one-hump aspect”—a single large hump, dark but indefinite in colour, apparently about 12 feet long and rising above the surface some 4 feet. It was moving slightly, but in no particular direction.

Circular ripples were radiating out from it, and striking the shore with considerable noise. It was this noise which first drew his attention to the ripples, which were “more than the steamer makes.” He had already seen X, and considered that it had just broken the surface when he first saw it.

After he had watched it for some minutes, it sank slowly, and did not reappear. The ripples were still coming in to shore for some little time after it had sunk.

14. (Middle of) August 1933. Between Altsigh and Invermoriston.

*Time*, not recollected. *Weather*, calm, warm, and sunny.

*Witness*, Mr. R. Fullerton, postman, Invermoriston. (P.)

Mr. Fullerton was on the road about half-way between Invermoriston and Altsigh, and saw X in the middle of the Loch at a distance of about half a mile.

It looked like a single, dark, elongated hump. It was moving across the Loch in zig-zags, 25–30 yards at a time—its speed being uniform,

<sup>66</sup> Mr. McQueen cannot determine this point, although he remembers that the day was a Thursday.

but its direction changing. Ultimately it sank, and he saw no more of it.

15. (Middle of) August 1933. In Primrose Bay.<sup>67</sup>

*Time*, about 5:30 p.m. *Weather*, calm, sun shining brightly.

*Witness*, Mr. John Cameron, 'bus-driver, Inverness. (P.)

Mr. Cameron caught sight of X while driving his 'bus towards Inverness. [Previously, he had been quite sceptical as to its existence.] It was going in the opposite direction, and was about 300 yards offshore when first seen, and about 120 at its closest approach [the road, in this vicinity, runs close to the Loch shore]. He stopped his 'bus, and he and his two passengers<sup>68</sup> got out to watch. He went as close to the Loch shore as he could, and watched X for about four minutes. It then dived under, and did not reappear.

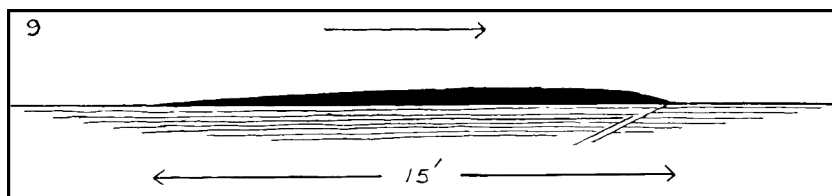


Fig. 9.—X AS SEEN BY MR. J. CAMERON (15).

It looked like a telegraph-pole floating in the water, and rising above this some 8 inches or so. But it was moving fast enough to make a perceptible V-shaped ripple. Taking the point of the V to be X's head, he could make out at the other end, just under water, a long tail moving slowly from side to side. The whole was dark in colour.

He put the total length of what he saw at 15 feet, emphasising that this was a conservative estimate.

[He accepted fig. 9 as representing the general appearance of what he saw.

He told me that his father was a keeper, and that he himself had had plenty of experience in watching wild creatures. What he saw was not a seal, an otter, or anything else with which he was familiar.]

<sup>67</sup> This name, which does not appear on the Ordnance maps, is that given locally to a small bay situated about a mile on the Inverness side of Altsigh.

<sup>68</sup> According to the *Scotsman*, 16.x.33, there were three passengers. I have no information as to their identity.

16. August 16, 1933. Off Urquhart Bay.

*Time*, 11–12 a.m. *Weather*, very fine.

*Witness*, Mrs. E. Garden Scott, Colinton, Edinburgh. (P.)

Mrs. Scott and her husband were driving along the N.W. side of the Loch, from Lochend towards Fort Augustus.

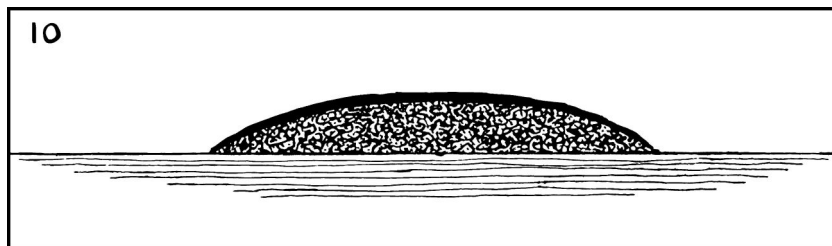


Fig. 10.—X AS SEEN BY MRS. SCOTT.

Two miles or so on the Inverness side of Drumnadrochit, she noticed something in the Loch which she took to be a boat, bottom upwards. It was somewhat ahead of them, and about 800 yards off.

It was only in view for a second or so. She just had time to remark, “I wonder if there has been a disaster,”<sup>69</sup> when it suddenly dived forward and disappeared.

Its aspect [the outline drawn by Mrs. Scott] is shown in fig. 10. There was a blackish ridge along the back, suggesting a boat’s keel. The remainder was elephant-grey in colour, and rough-looking, as if marked with large blisters.

17. August 24, 1933. Off Does.

*Time*, about 11 a.m. *Weather*, fine, sun shining brightly, Loch very calm indeed,<sup>70</sup> no haze.

*Witnesses*, Miss M. Rattray, Whitebridge. (P.)

Miss A. Rattray, Whitebridge. (P.)

Miss M. Hamilton, M.A., Edinburgh. (P.)

These three ladies were motoring (Miss A. Rattray driving) along the S.E. side of the Loch on their way to Inverness, and caught sight of X from a point on the road about a mile on the Foyers side of Does. They had previously been scanning the Loch, hoping to see X; but had

<sup>69</sup> There had been a violent storm on the previous night.

<sup>70</sup> A photograph, taken about twenty minutes earlier, shows the Loch surface looking as smooth as glass.

ceased to do so, and were not thinking about it, when Miss M. Rattray noticed a disturbance on the surface of the Loch opposite to them, and a little more than half-way across it towards the opposite side [i.e. about 1,200 yards off]. They stopped, and watched it from the car.

A drifter was steaming down the Loch towards Inverness, and as the disturbance was at some distance—about 500 yards, they estimated—astern of her, they thought at first that it was her wake; until they noticed that there was a well-marked calm area between the drifter's stern and the disturbance. They then looked more closely, and observed several humps in line on the surface of the water, rising and falling with a slightly undulating motion which suggested that of a caterpillar.

The maximum number of humps seen at a time was five—the second (counting from the front) being notably longer, and higher out of the water than any other. [Miss M. Rattray and Miss Hamilton concurred upon this point—Miss A. Rattray agreed that one hump was definitely larger than the remainder, but was not positive as to which of the humps it was. Miss Hamilton also stated that the fourth and fifth humps were slightly smaller than the first and third.]

At times, the line of humps rose and fell on a more or less even keel, so that sometimes five were visible, sometimes three—the fourth and fifth being submerged—and sometimes one only, the second hump. Fig. 11 is accepted by all three witnesses as representing what they saw.

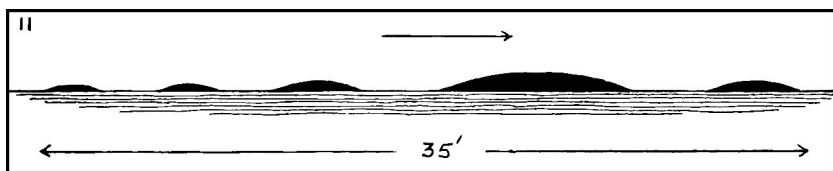


Fig. 11.—X AS SEEN BY MISS HAMILTON.

A wash, like that of a motor-boat and quite distinct from that left by the drifter, spread out from the front end of the line of humps. X's speed varied, but its distance from the vessel remained more or less constant.

After they had watched from the car for two minutes or so, X passed more or less out of sight behind some intervening trees. They moved on until they were clear of these, and then left the car and went

down to the shore. X was still following the drifter; but shortly afterwards they noticed that it had apparently turned round under water—none of them actually saw it turning—and was going in the opposite direction. After they had driven on a few hundred yards, Miss A. Rattray had a glimpse of it, “like a dot in the water,” going down the Loch towards Fort Augustus.

All three agreed that the apparent length of the line of humps was less than that of the drifter. Miss M. Rattray and her sister considered that it was slightly less than one-half of the latter’s length—Miss Hamilton’s estimate was somewhat higher.

[Mr. Porter, the Resident Engineer of the Caledonian Canal, very kindly furnished me with a list of all vessels which passed Dores, going eastwards, on August 24. This enabled me to identify the drifter with certainty as the *Grant Hay*, of Lossiemouth.<sup>71</sup> Her length is 86 feet. Presumably, therefore, the length of the line of humps was some 35 feet or more.<sup>72</sup>

In reply to my enquiry, the skipper of the *Grant Hay*, Mr. J. Main, informed me that he had no gear towing astern during his passage through Loch Ness, and that no member of the ship’s company saw anything of X.]

18. August 25 or 26, 1933. Off Port Clair.

*Time*, about 9 a.m. *Weather*, fine, sun shining brightly, Loch very calm.

*Witnesses*, Mrs. B. McDonell, Port Clair. (P.)

Mrs. Sutherland, Drymen. (L.)

Mrs. McDonell and Mrs. Sutherland (her sister-in-law) were breakfasting in the former’s house at Port Clair. The window of the room looks on to the Loch, but the view is obstructed by trees except towards an old pier at the Loch side, about 100 yards from the house. Mrs. Sutherland noticed, off this pier, a “wash,” as if made by a passing steamer. They went across the road and down to the pier; and saw X at a distance of about 300 yards, some 100 yards from the shore and moving eastward.

<sup>71</sup> The list also comprised five motor fishing-boats, but no other drifter.

<sup>72</sup> In my *Times* article, I gave the mean of all three estimates as three-quarters of the drifter’s length. The witnesses reduced their estimates after hearing the actual length of the *Grant Hay*.

[Their view of it was practically end-on, and it was rapidly receding from them. These points should be noted, in view of what follows.]

Mrs. McDonell describes what she saw as a brownish-black hump, which she took to be X's body; and which was rising and falling slightly as it went. At the rear end was a good deal of splashing.

Mrs. Sutherland, who also saw an object "of a very dark grey colour ... moving in an undulating way," took this to be X's head and neck—while at a distance of about 20 feet astern she saw what appeared to be either a hump or a "tail, or fin."

X remained in sight for about two minutes, and then sank.

19. August 26, 1933. In Inchnacardoch Bay.

*Time*, 9:15 p.m. *Weather*, fine, sun shining (but setting),  
Loch very calm.

*Witness*, Mr. W. D. H. Moir, Fort Augustus. (L.)

Mr. Moir was walking from Fort Augustus along the road running towards Port Clair, which skirts Inchnacardoch Bay. Just after he had passed Cherry Island (see fig. 6) he noticed a "powerful wash" in the Loch, and observed an object heading to pass close to the far side of the island. He took it at first to be a boat hurrying for the Canal lock—whose gates, at that time, were closed at 9 p.m. As to the visibility, he remarks:

"At the time ... the sun was setting behind the hills, casting bright reflecting lights high over the Loch and the tree-tops, while the water was dead calm."

The object passed "dangerously close" to the far side of Cherry Island, and headed into Inchnacardoch Bay. By this time Mr. Moir—who, having heard no sound of oars or engine, had concluded that it was not a boat—had turned round and was walking back towards the bay. When within the bay it slowed down and appeared to roll from side to side, causing a "rolling wash" which spread until it reached the shore.

Suspecting that he was looking at X, he left the road and went down towards the shore for a closer view—managing to get within, as he estimates, 200 yards of it. [According to a tracing from the 6-inch Ordnance sheet, on which he marked his position and that of X, the distance was actually about 170 yards.] Two points chiefly sur-

prised him—X's colour, and its size. He had gathered, from previous accounts, that X was black, or almost so—whereas it appeared to him to be brown, “with a tendency to changing colours of a lighter nature, nearer the surface of the water.” And he estimated the length of the portion visible to him at 40 feet. Somewhat resembling an upturned boat, it rose moderately sharply to a height of some 5 feet above water at about the same distance from the rear end, and then sloped gently down towards the front. [Fig. 12 is based upon an outline, not to scale, which Mr. Moir sent to me.] As he saw neither head nor tail, he con-

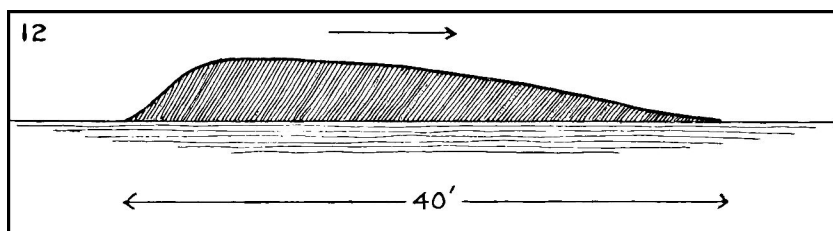


Fig. 12.—X AS SEEN BY MR. MOIR.

cluded that the total length could scarcely be less than 50 feet. [He had X in view for four to five minutes.]

He started to walk back towards Fort Augustus; hoping to get a lift on the way, collect his camera, and return to photograph X. After he had gone some distance, he noticed that the time was 9:30, and decided that the chance of getting a photograph was remote. He therefore returned—but discovered, on coming in sight of the bay, that X had disappeared.

20. (End of) August 1933. Off Invermoriston.

*Time*, about 6 p.m. *Weather*, calm and sunny, Loch very calm.

*Witness*, Mrs. C. MacDonald, Invermoriston. (P.)

Mrs. MacDonald saw X, at a distance of 500–600 yards, off the mouth of the Moriston river. She described it as looking “like a great eel, but much thicker.” It was blackish-grey in colour; and, while she could not estimate its length, she considered that its body rose some 3 feet above water. It appeared to be rolling slightly from side to side, and was in view, for about three minutes, moving towards the shore, after which it sank.



[In reply to my enquiries, she stated that it was quite certainly not a floating log. Moreover, she had often seen whales, sharks, porpoises and seals—but it was unlike any of these.]

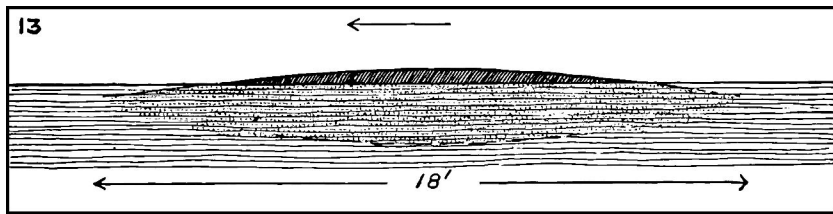


Fig. 13.—X AS SEEN BY MR. MACPHAIL.

21. (End of) August 1933. Off Dore.

*Time*, about 8 p.m. *Weather*, overcast, no sun, Loch very calm and clear.

*Witness*, Mr. Hector Macphail, police constable, Dore. (P.)

Mr. Macphail was on the Dore-Whitefield Road, at a point about half a mile S.W. of Dore. His attention was attracted by a brown object, about a foot or more in length, appearing above the surface of the Loch and moving slowly past him from right to left. It was not more than 60 yards offshore, and less than 100 yards from where he was standing.

Gradually, more of X emerged until it presented the appearance of a brown hump whose total length, including portions just under water but visible, he estimated at about 18 feet. He could (faintly) make out the underpart of the body at its middle, but not the head or tail. The portions under water were also brown in colour. He estimated the diameter of the body, at the thickest part, at 2 feet or so.<sup>73</sup> The round of the back appeared smooth, and he saw no fins. Fig. 13 was drawn under his supervision.

He went down to the shore to get a closer view, but as he did so X sheered away and sank. About a quarter of an hour later, he saw a black object off Tor Point, but considered that it might only be a shadow.

22. September 1933.<sup>74</sup> Eastward of Inchnacardoch Bay.

*Time*, 3:45 p.m. *Weather*, sunny, Loch calm.

<sup>73</sup> This estimate would, however, be considerably affected by refraction.

*Witnesses, Mr. J. McSkimming, Fort Augustus (first sighting).  
(P.)*

Mr. and Mrs. McSkimming were on the road near Comdr. Meiklem's house [close to where Comdr. Meiklem himself saw X on August 5, 1933] and sighted X some distance off the point [un-named on the Ordnance maps] about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile eastward of Cherry Island. X was moving shorewards, and went out of sight behind the point.

It looked like a large hump, dark brown in colour, rising clearly above the surface of the water. [It was a considerable distance away—some 2,000 yards<sup>75</sup>—and must, to be noticeable, have been of a fair size.] Mr. McSkimming estimated its length at “a good 30 feet.”

23a. September 22, 1933. Off Altsigh.

*Time*, about 11 a.m. *Weather*, very fine, sun shining brightly, Loch calm.

*Witnesses, Miss J. S. Fraser. (P.)*

Miss M. Howden. (P.)

Mrs. G. Fraser. (L.)

Mrs. W. E. Hobbes. (L.)

X was seen, by these four witnesses, from the balcony of the Half-Way House tea-room at Altsigh, in a position about  $164^{\circ}$ , 1,000 yards from them—roughly half-way obliquely across the Loch towards the opposite shore. The conditions of observation were generally excellent; but the sun, while high, was almost in line with X.

The latter remained in view—without much change of position, but rising and sinking slightly from time to time—for some ten minutes. The head and neck rose almost vertically out of the water. Miss Fraser concentrated her attention upon these; and their general appearance, by her account, was that of “a mythical creature.” The head was slightly “dished”—“like a terrier’s,” she put it—in front; and at the junction of the head and neck, when facing her, she noticed a kind of frill, which she described as like “a pair of kippered herrings.” She also noticed what appeared to be a large glittering circular eye in the head, in the position in which one would expect an eye to be situated.

<sup>74</sup> Exact date not recollected.

<sup>75</sup> If this sighting stood alone, I do not think that I should have included it. But Mr. McSkimming saw X on another occasion, at much shorter range.

X moved its head from side to side, and the “eye” appeared to move with the head. [I am of opinion that this “eye” was produced by irradiation, or reflection—see above, as to the sun’s position.]

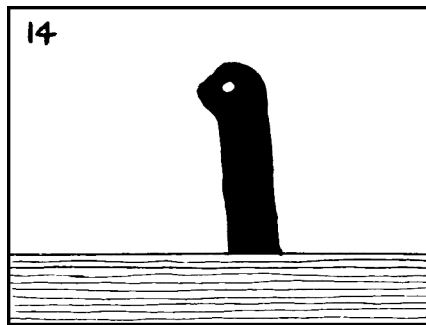


Fig. 14.—X AS SEEN BY MISS FRASER.

The head and neck rose and sank periodically; moving more or less vertically in doingso. Miss Fraser only remarked the head and neck; but Miss Howden also noticed two humps, and “something indefinite” which might be a “tail.” The colour of head, neck and humps

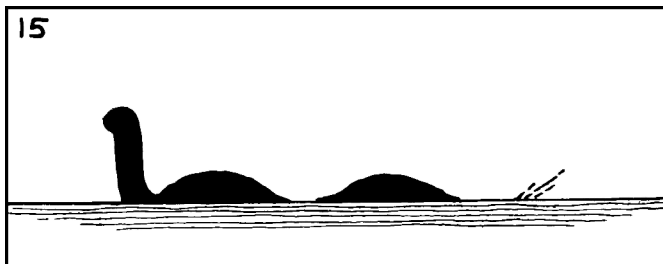


Fig. 15.—MISS HOWDEN’S SKETCH.

was dark; but in the bright sunlight it might have been anything from dark-brown to dark-grey.

Mrs. G. Fraser also saw the head and neck, two humps and an indefinite tail. She first noticed a splashing in the water, at one end of what appeared to be a “long stretch of glittering silver,” showing up against the (comparatively) dark surface of the water. Then the head and neck rose slowly out of the water at the opposite end, remained in view for a minute or so, and then sank. They reappeared, and slowly rose higher than before, while two humps appeared close behind them. The splashing from the tail end had ceased by this time, but the “silver streak” was still visible. The head turned slowly from side to side.

X did not appear to be discomposed by a vessel<sup>76</sup> passing on the far side of the Loch, but ultimately headed towards Invermoriston, moving quite slowly. It finally sank and did not reappear, having been almost continuously in view for over a quarter of an hour.

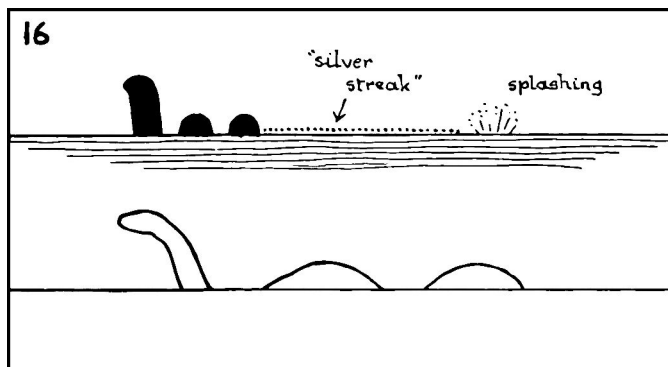


Fig. 16.—MRS. FRASER'S SKETCH

Mrs. Hobbes (and a friend, Miss Mullock) saw what she described<sup>77</sup> as “two shining eyes, separated by a dark perpendicular line.” She took it, at first, for a steamboat with its lights showing. They left the balcony, and drove in their car to a point from which they hoped to get a closer view; but by that time X had finally submerged.

Fig. 14, drawn with Miss Fraser's concurrence, shows the proportions of the head and neck, as observed by her. Fig. 15 was drawn by Miss Howden, and fig. 16 by Mrs. Fraser. The lower portion of the last-named figure shows a version of her sketch which appeared in the *Northern Chronicle* of October 25, 1933. She remarks, of this, “... you will notice that my sketch was not [re-] produced very faithfully.”

23b. September 22, 1933. Off Balnafaich.

*Time*, 2 p.m. *Weather*, brilliantly sunny, Loch calm, no haze.

*Witness*, Mr. D. W. Morrison, Wuhu.<sup>78</sup> (L.)

<sup>76</sup> I have failed to identify this vessel. Mrs. Fraser speaks of it as a trawler, going towards Dochfour.

<sup>77</sup> In the local parish magazine. This account was kindly communicated to me by her husband, the Rev. W. E. Hobbes, of Wroxeter.

<sup>78</sup> On the Yangtse. Mr. Morrison was on leave at the time of his experience, but had sailed for China before I read of it.

Mr. Morrison, and several other observers,<sup>79</sup> saw X from Bal-nafoich, a house not far from Dore, and overlooking the N.E. end of the Loch. It is about 600 yards from the shore, and some 250 feet above Loch-level.

When first sighted [by Miss Gracey, one of the party], X bore about  $338^\circ$ , and was roughly 1,250 yards off. [The bearings and distances here given are taken from a tracing of the 6-inch Ordnance sheet which I forwarded to Mr. Morrison, and on which he plotted X's approximate track.]

It was heading towards Fort Augustus, and passed in front of the observers, from right to left, at a speed of some 15 miles per hour (13 knots). At its nearest approach, it was roughly 950 yards away;

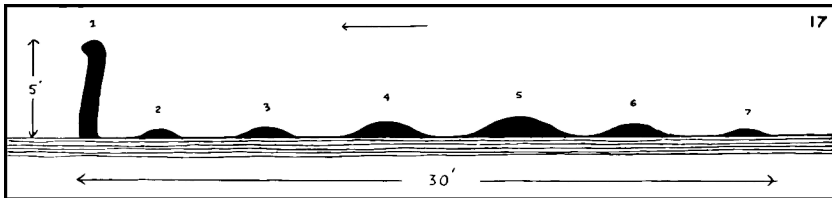


Fig. 17.—MR. MORRISON'S SKETCH.

and it submerged when approximately 2,200 yards  $241^\circ$  from Bal-nafoich, having been in sight for some four minutes.<sup>80</sup> When it sank, a trawler<sup>81</sup> was in sight about a mile away, steaming towards Inverness along the far side of the Loch.

X looked like “a huge caterpillar,” and appeared to move “with an up-and-down motion, and not the lateral motion you would expect in a giant eel.” Fig. 17 is from a sketch sent me by Mr. Morrison, and the following extracts from his letter relate to it:

“The portion of the body above water was in a series of humps, with water spaces in between. I should say that there were about

<sup>79</sup> These, also, had left the neighbourhood before I visited it. I gathered that their accounts were in general agreement with Mr. Morrison's, and that his would probably be the most valuable.

<sup>80</sup> By Mr. Morrison's account; taking X's track in conjunction with its estimated speed, the period would be six minutes.

<sup>81</sup> I have not tried to identify this trawler—it seemed unlikely that she would have noticed X, or that she was the same vessel as that referred to by Mrs. Fraser as having passed at Altsigh about 11:15 a.m.

seven humps, some possibly two feet above the water-line, and with Nos. 3, 4 and 5 more prominent than the others as if indicating the larger girth of the body amidships. I regret that I am unable to say how these portions of body compare in proportion with the water spaces, and there is no point in my guessing. My drawing, however, seems to represent it fairly, as I saw it.

"The head I should describe as 'snake-like,' similar to an adder and tapering. It would, however, be approximately the same bore as the neck, which appeared to be at right angles with the water when raised. ... The head was not apparent unless raised. ...

"My camera had been left in my car at the top of the drive—about 300 yards away. ... I debated fetching it, but was unwilling to give up my view of the creature, which might in the meantime have disappeared, and again I knew that at that distance it would have appeared only as a speck, if that."

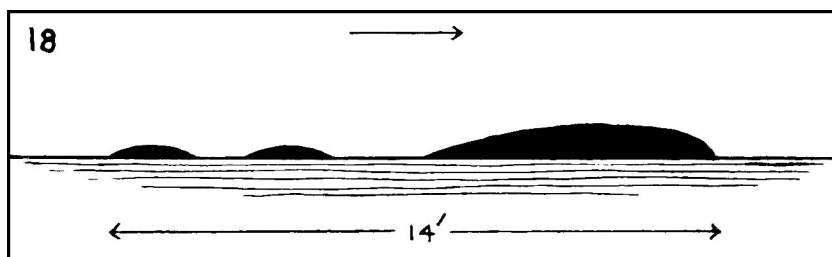


Fig. 18.—X AS SEEN BY MR. JAMES CAMERON.

24. (End of) September 1933. In Inchnacardoch Bay.

*Time*, about noon. *Weather*, fine and calm.

*Witness*, Mr. James Cameron, postman, Fort Augustus (*second sighting*). (P.)

Mr. Cameron was on the promontory at the south side of Inchnacardoch Bay (see fig. 18), and observed X moving, at no great speed, out into the Loch. He had it in view for about ten minutes. At its nearest, it was some 250 yards off. Fig. 18 was drawn under his supervision.

Three humps were visible, of which the foremost was brownish-black and somewhat blunter at the front end than at the rear. Astern of it were two smaller humps, indeterminate in colour. He estimated

the total length of the three at about 14 feet overall. X was rising and sinking slightly as it progressed, and looked “like a great tadpole.”

He walked down towards it, but his view became obscured by intervening trees, and when he came clear of these it was no longer to be seen, although its wash was still visible.

25. October 1, 1933. Off Fort Augustus.

*Time*, 10:10 a.m. *Weather*, fine, sun shining brightly, Loch flat calm, very little shimmer or haze on the water.

*Witness*, Mr. B. A. Russell, M.A., Fort Augustus. (P.)

Mr. Russell was out on the rocks just above Comdr. Meiklem’s house (see fig. 6) and about three minutes’ walk from his own.<sup>82</sup> This position is about 100 feet above loch-level and the view from it is quite unobstructed by trees.

He first noticed X’s head and neck above water at a point due east of him and about 800 yards away. It might have been up some little time before he looked in that direction. X swam slowly across his front from left to right, occasionally turning its head from side to side. When doing so, the head and neck appeared to move more or less together, as a boat’s davit swings—the head did not twist upon the neck. Fig. 19 is from a drawing by Mr. Russell, made soon after the event.

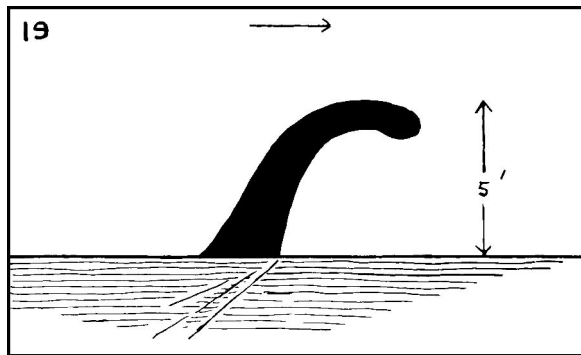


Fig. 19.—MR. RUSSELL’S SKETCH.

[After deliberation, and at my instance, he selected this drawing—in preference to another which accompanied my *Times* article, and to a

<sup>82</sup> He is the Fort Augustus schoolmaster, and his house forms part of the school buildings.

third which appeared in the *Illustrated London News*<sup>83</sup>—as best representing what he saw.]

The head was not much larger than the neck. He saw no appendages to the head, and no eyes, etc.; being too far off, in any event, to distinguish these. The colour of head and neck was dark, but indefinite.

X swam very slowly, keeping a straight course. At its nearest approach it was some 700 yards, or a little less, from him. He saw no part of the body—nor did he observe any reflection of the head and neck in the water. A V-shaped ripple spread off from the front of the neck at the point where this met the surface. So far as he could judge, the head was carried about 5 feet above the water. Birds could be seen wheeling and flying low over X.

His observations were made with the naked eye, as he was afraid to leave off watching and run for his binoculars. He shifted his position slightly south-westward to retain as good a view as possible—but any attempt to get nearer the shore would have brought him into dead ground, from which his view would have been obscured. He had carefully noted the time at which he first saw X, by his watch; it was 10:10—and at 10:22 X, being then distant about 800 yards, sank slowly down as a whole—no alteration in the poise of head or neck being observable.

Previously, Mr. Russell had been of the opinion that some creature—probably a big seal—had strayed into Loch Ness; but he had never expected to see anything so remarkable as this.

26. October 20, 1933. Off Port Clair.

*Time*, about 7:30 a.m. *Weather*, calm, sun shining, very little ripple on water.

|                                               |                               |      |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|
| <i>Witnesses</i> , Mr. R. McConnell, engineer | } of tug<br><i>Scott II</i> . | (P.) |
| Mr. D. Cameron, mate                          |                               | (P.) |
| Mr. D. McKenzie, fireman                      |                               | (P.) |
| Mr. J. McMillan, of barge <i>Muriel</i> .     |                               | (P.) |

On this occasion (and, so far as I have discovered, this occasion only) X was seen from a vessel passing through the Loch—the tug *Scott II*, belonging to the Caledonian Canal Co. Towing the barge

<sup>83</sup> 13.i.34.



*Muriel*,<sup>84</sup> she had left Fort Augustus about 7 a.m. At the time of the sighting she was about 3 miles down the Loch, and roughly in the centre-line of it. [The following account is primarily based on information from Mr. McConnell, and confirmed by statements from the other witnesses.]

Mr. McConnell noticed a wave-hike mound of water moving out from the side of the Loch (see fig. 20). It came along the track shown, and turned to follow the *Muriel*. It gave the impression of something big moving just below the surface, and coming to have a look at the vessels. He called to Mr. Cameron, who was steering; and the latter, while still holding the wheel, moved to the wheelhouse door to look. Soon after, he shouted to Mr. McMillan in the *Muriel*, and at this X sheered away and sank. A little later, it reappeared at the point 2, but then sank again, finally.

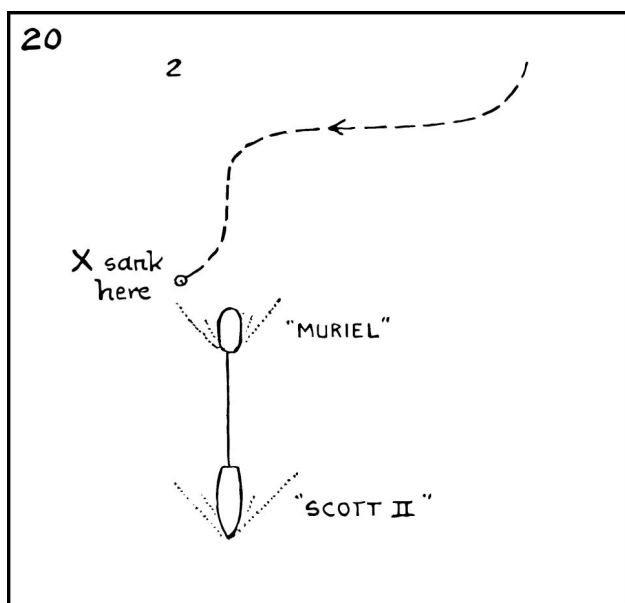


Fig. 20.—X's TRACK NEAR THE "SCOTT II."

Mr. McConnell saw little of X itself while it was following them; but Mr. Cameron, who observed it sheer away and sink, estimated that about 8 feet of its back was showing, rising some 2 feet above water. Its colour was dark, and its shape indefinite on account of the V-wash

<sup>84</sup> At about 40 fathoms scope.

spreading off from it, which became mingled with that from the barge. The tug's wash was well clear of it.

Mr. McKenzie and Mr. McMillan were both below (the *Muriel's* tiller being lashed) when X was first sighted, and only came on deck in time to see it at point 2—some 200–300 yards astern. Both concur with Mr. McConnell in describing what they then saw as being dark in colour and resembling a floating log. Mr. McConnell's estimate of its visible length—about 8 feet—agrees with Mr. Cameron's observation earlier.

[Mr. McConnell was much impressed with the size and general aspect of the wave, mound or splash—he used all three terms to describe it—which first drew his attention. He considered that it could only have been occasioned by something of very considerable size.

He was positive, from previous experience in many parts of the world, that what he and the others saw was neither a whale nor a seal.]

27a. October 22, 1933. Off Altsigh.

*Time*, about 9 a.m. *Weather*, fine, Loch calm. A slight haze appeared later.

*Witness*, Mrs. J. Simpson, Altsigh (*fifth sighting*).<sup>85</sup> (P.)

On this occasion Mrs. Simpson saw X out in the middle of the Loch, at a distance of some 800 yards. The head and neck were visible, rising vertically out of the water to a height which she estimated at about 2 feet. Near where the neck entered the water, she caught glimpses of what she took to be two flippers, “moving like those of a sea-lion.” [I was somewhat surprised at this comparison, and enquired if she had seen one. She told me that she had, some years previously, in a circus at Dufftown.] Eventually X dived and disappeared.

27b. October 22, 1933. Opposite Glendoe.

*Time*, about 11:30 a.m. *Weather*, sun shining, Loch very calm, no haze.

*Witness*, Mr. A. Gillies, head-keeper, Glendoe.

<sup>85</sup> Mrs. Simpson's first sighting (May 27, 1933) is described on p. 35. Between that date and October 22, she saw X on three other occasions, but only the head was visible. As the dates of these sightings are uncertain, I have omitted them from the evidence.

Mr. Gillies' observations were made from Glendoe House, near Fort Augustus. This is about 450 yards from the Loch shore, and some 300 feet above the water.

While looking casually at the Loch, he noticed a violent commotion in the water at the far side, bearing about N. from him. and some 200 yards offshore.

He had a telescope with him—he was going to have a look at a badger-earth farther down the hill—but did not turn it on the commotion immediately. He walked down to a viewpoint from which he could see the badger-earth, and sat down. As the commotion was still going on, he put his glass on to it [a 3-draw stalker's telescope by Bailey, Birmingham—power about 20, definition good. The scene of the commotion was approximately 2,000 yards from him, so that his view of it through the glass was more or less equal to a naked-eye view at 100 yards].

The disturbance looked like a wide strip of boiling foam (fig. 21) “as if a big propeller were kicking up the water.” All the time that Mr. Gillies watched, the water continued to boil up in foam all over the area of this strip.

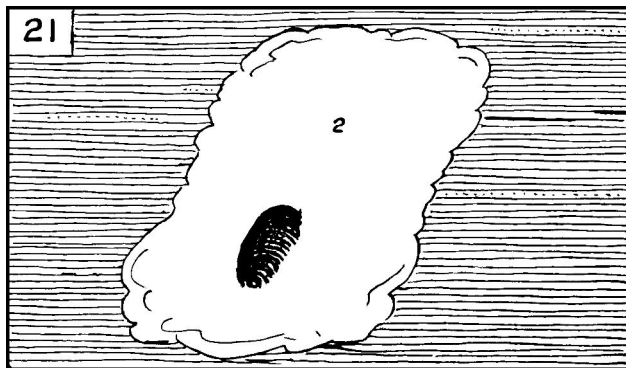


Fig. 21.—X AS SEEN BY MR. GILLIES.

There then appeared, at the point marked 1, a blackish hump, rising some 2-3 feet above the surface. He could see traces of paddling action going on at either side of the hump, although the foam prevented him from seeing any definite paddles. The hump remained in sight for about a minute. It then sank quickly: but it—or another like it—came up almost immediately at the point marked 2. He had this also in sight for about a minute.

Mr. Gillies then ran back to the gunroom for a newer and better telescope, which he preferred<sup>86</sup> but when he came out of the gunroom the Loch was calm all over, and no sign of the commotion remained.

[He had noticed, just before going to the gunroom, a small fishing-boat being rowed up the Loch, and some 200 yards from X. The boat's outboard-engine had broken down; and the rowers, having their backs to the commotion, did not see this. But Mr. Gillies considers that their approach disturbed X, and induced it to sink.

Mr. Gillies was credited, in various papers,<sup>87</sup> with having seen X again on December 14, 1933. In a letter to me (4.iii.34) he contradicts this report. "I told the press-man ... that I saw some black object going slowly along but could not tell what it was; but I understand since then that otters have been seen there, and it certainly looked like three or four otters together, going in a bunch. ..."]

27c. October 22, 1933. Off Altsigh.

*Time*, about a quarter-past twelve noon. *Weather*, exceptionally fine, sun very bright.

*Witness*, Mr. G. McQueen, A.A. Scout, Fort Augustus (*second sighting*). (P.)

Mr. McQueen, who had previously seen X in August 1933, off the mouth of the Moriston, saw it on this occasion from the road overlooking the N.W. side of the Loch, about half a mile on the Drumnadrochit side of Altsigh. [It may be noted that since his first experience he habitually carried a camera, and kept a good look-out for X. Unfortunately, he had got his camera wet on October 21, and consequently did not have it with him.]

He first noticed a large and well-marked V of white foam, about 200 yards offshore and opposite him. The apex of the V pointed away from him, and the sides stood up considerably above water-level and were some 30-40 feet long. It zig-zagged across the Loch away from him. Occasionally the water appeared to be churned up some little distance in advance of the point of the V. The wash of the disturbance

<sup>86</sup> I compared this with the glass he actually used, but could find little difference. Both were very good instruments.

<sup>87</sup> E.g. *Daily Mail*, and *Bulletin*, 15.xii.33.

broke on the shore [much more violently than it had done on the first occasion of his sighting X].

What little he could see of the body—the boiling foam all round it obscured its shape—was definitely brown in colour; but very little of it—a portion some 5–6 feet long, and rising 2 feet or so above the surface—was showing. He considered that this portion was either the head, or a part near it.

He watched for about fifteen minutes, during which time no one passed on the road. Finally, he drove on, leaving X still in view. He looked back from Altsigh, and could still see the commotion on the surface.

27d. October 22, 1933. Opposite Glendoe.

*Time*, about 12:45 p.m. *Weather*, very fine, sun shining,  
Loch like glass, no haze.

*Witness*, Miss C. MacDonald, Upper Glendoe. (P.)

Miss MacDonald was walking down the drive from Glendoe House towards Fort Augustus, and noticed X some distance beyond Fraser Point, heading in her direction. It was moving moderately slowly, and she watched it for some ten minutes or more. It was still in full view when she grew tired of watching it, and walked on.

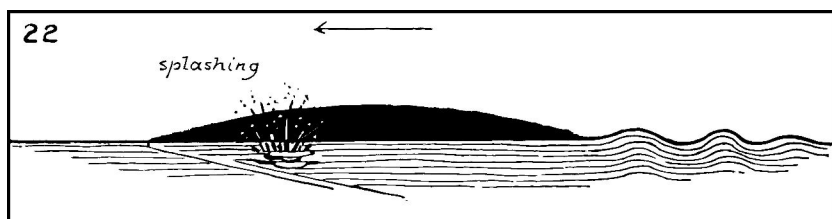


Fig. 23.—X AS SEEN BY MISS C. MACDONALD.

It was a long way off—at the nearest, some three-quarters of a mile. [On the other hand, her view-point was elevated—about 200 feet above Loch level—and the sun behind her.] X showed as a dark hump—it looked black in the sunlight, but might have been any dark colour. A V-shaped ripple spread out from the front end, and behind was a big wake of white foam—almost as much as an outboard-engined boat would make (fig. 22).

On either side of the hump, and a little in front of its centre, she saw violent continuous splashing. And she seemed to see, but could

not definitely assert that she saw, something like “two bits of stick, or the oars of a boat, splashing up and down, one each side.”

28. October 30, 1933. Off Urquhart Bay.

*Time*, 3 p.m. *Weather*, clear, sun not shining, slight ripple caused by S.W. wind.

*Witness*, Mr. F. MacLeod, Drumnadrochit. (P.)

Mr. MacLeod saw X from in front of his house (St. Ninian's farm), which is on the N. side of Urquhart Bay and overlooks it, being about 100 feet above the Loch and some 300 yards from the shore.

He took X, at first, for a floating 9-foot sleeper. It looked black, and appeared to be drifting before a slight S.W. wind. Its distance from him was about 450 yards.

A minute or so later he looked again, and found that the “sleeper” had disappeared. This interested him, and he continued to watch carefully.

X soon reappeared, but much less of its length was now showing—not more than a foot or two. It was going at a marked angle to its former course, and throwing off a ripple which cut across that caused by the wind. Then he observed a big commotion in the water all round it, and it changed its course to S.E. It remained visible for some time, moving at about 5 knots, and showing at intervals from 4–9 feet of its length. It ultimately sank and disappeared.

[He told me that he had seen whales<sup>88</sup> in the Mediterranean, but never anything quite like this.]

29. November 10, 1933. Off Fort Augustus.

*Time*, about 2 p.m. *Weather*, fine with occasional showers.<sup>89</sup>

Sun shining, Loch like glass. No haze.

*Witnesses*, Mr. C. MacRae, Fort Augustus. (P.)

Mr. J. MacKinnon, Fort Augustus. (P.)

Mr. MacRae and Mr. MacKinnon were working at Borlum Farm, which fronts the extreme S.W. point of the Loch. Mr. MacRae noticed a violent splashing of water on the nearside of the old pier [which is about 400 yards southward of Cherry Island]. The splashing was

<sup>88</sup> Probably killer-whales—although the cachalot is not unknown there.

<sup>89</sup> A rainbow was visible.

about 100 yards on his side of the pier, and would therefore be almost a mile away. After a short time, he made out “a big brown thing” in the centre of the disturbance. It sank, and came up again, two or three times.

He drew Mr. MacKinnon’s attention to it, and the latter went to the farmhouse and borrowed a stalker’s telescope from Mr. Matheson, the proprietor. [It was a good 3-draw glass by Ross, power about 20.]

With this Mr. MacKinnon made out an object which looked like an elongated reddish-brown hump about 25 feet long and rising 1½ feet to 2 feet above water at its centre. It did not move horizontally while he watched it, but sank and rose again two or three times.

He handed the glass to Mr. MacRae, but before the latter had had more than a hasty glance through this, X sank and was not seen again. Mr. MacRae described it, from his naked-eye view, as resembling an upturned boat, around which white foam was showing during most of the time it was visible.

30. November 11, 1933. Off Corrie’s Cave.

*Time*, about 11:30 a.m. *Weather*, Dead calm, bright sun, slightly patchy ripple on water, no haze. An exceptionally fine day.

*Witnesses*, Mr. John Cameron, Fort Augustus (*first sighting*).<sup>90</sup> (P.)

Mr. J. McSkimming, Fort Augustus (*second sighting*). (P.)

Mr. Cameron was driving a motor-lorry from Fort Augustus to Invermoriston. At Fraser’s Point he caught sight of a V-shaped wash in the Loch, rather more than half-way across and in line with Mrs. Hambro’s monument.<sup>91</sup> It was coming straight towards him, and he stopped to watch it.

The forward motion of the V slowed down, and X came to the surface, still moving slowly forwards. Seen end-on, it showed as a dark triangle, apex upward—like a house-gable. Mr. Cameron did not no-

<sup>90</sup> Mr. Cameron had twice previously seen something which might have been X; but the identification was uncertain, and I have therefore omitted details of these sightings.

<sup>91</sup> See p. 4*f*. The position of the monument is shown in fig. 1.

tice any ridge at the top of the back; but it looked sharp there, “like the back of a thin old horse.” It was then some 800 yards from him.

Having diminished this distance to about 700 yards, X turned to starboard, thus coming broadside-on. It now exhibited the usual “one-hump aspect,” the hump being about 5–8 feet long and rising a foot or so above water. It no longer appeared dark, but almost silvery—this, he considered was due to the sunlight being reflected from it. It slowed down still more, and suddenly sank without making any disturbance.

It was down two or three seconds only, and then came up again—appearing, at first, “like a bird in the water,” and then as a much smaller and lower hump, 2–3 feet long.

At this point Mr. Cameron was joined by Mr. McSkimming<sup>92</sup> (and also by Mr. Wm. Grant, of Invermoriston). All three stood watching X, which stayed up for two or three minutes and then sank again as before.

It came up a second time, showing some 6–8 feet of its length, and stayed up some minutes. It then sank, in the same quiet manner as before, and did not reappear. [They remained watching for ten minutes or more.]

[The above is Mr. Cameron’s account. Mr. McSkimming’s, which I obtained independently, agreed in practically all points. He noticed that X, while on the surface, seemed to roll a little, axially; and that it was apparently lighter in colour on the then-exposed portion.]

31. November 14, 1933. Off Knockie.

*Time*, about 3 p.m. *Weather*, clear and calm.

*Witnesses*, Dr. J. Kirton, Fort Augustus (*first sighting*). (L.)

Mrs. Kirton.

[I will leave Dr. Kirton to tell his own story. Here is an extract from his letter (10.ii.34).]

“... My wife and I were coming down the hill road behind the Invermoriston Hotel when we saw the Monster swimming steadily towards the Knockie boathouse, with a considerable wash spreading out on each side. Unfortunately, my field glasses were down in my car, a few hundred yards away, but both my wife and I have

<sup>92</sup> See No. 22, p. 52.



eyesight above rather than below the average, and we could see the bulk quite distinctly, though the finer details were not clear.

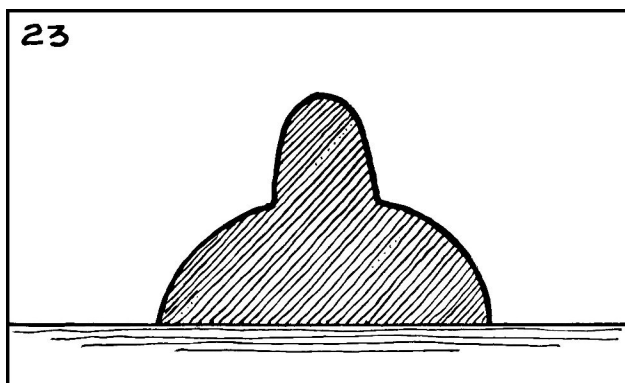


Fig. 23.—DR. KIRTON'S FIRST SKETCH.

“I have measured the distance on the map, and as the crow flies we must be  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles from the creature, perhaps rather less. It was swimming away from us, so that we had a rear view of it. Even at that distance we could see the rounded back, with the protuberance in the middle—for all the world like the rear view of a duck in a pond. In size—i.e. in breadth—it seemed to me about the same width as one of the Loch rowing-boats, i.e. about 3–4 feet; the total height visible above water would be rather less than this, about  $\frac{2}{3}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$  of the width; colour very dark brownish-black.

“We watched it for about ten (10) minutes, till it disappeared into the shadow of the hills opposite.”

[Dr. Kirton also sent me a sketch—fig. 23—of what he and Mrs. Kirton saw. The original was not drawn on the spot, but was one of several sketches made, from memory, the same evening. He selected this one—Mrs. Kirton concurring—as best representing the proportions of what they saw. A later passage in his letter shows that he considered what he speaks of as “the protuberance” to have been X’s head and/or neck.]

32. November 20, 1933. Near Altsigh.

*Time*, about 9 a.m. *Weather*, fine, sun shining, Loch very calm, no haze.

*Witness*, Miss N. Simpson, Altsigh. (P.)

Miss Simpson was cycling from Altsigh towards Invermoriston. When about three-quarters of a mile from Altsigh, she happened to catch sight, over the top of the roadside wall, of X lying motionless at the surface, close inshore.<sup>93</sup> She dismounted, went to the edge of the bank, and stood looking down at it.

[I took notes of her account, on the exact spot, two days later; and obtained sufficient measurements to determine X's distance with fair accuracy.]

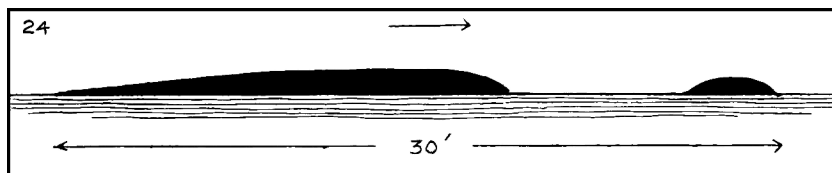


Fig. 24.—X AS SEEN BY MISS N. SIMPSON.

X was about 45 yards from the shore. Its appearance is shown in fig. 24, which was drawn under Miss Simpson's supervision. No under-water parts could be seen—no fins, etc. The smaller portion visible seemed to be rather narrower than the other. Total length about 30 feet. Colour, dark.

It remained motionless; but seemed, after a time, to be slowly settling down in the water. It was in view for some ten minutes, after which it sank altogether. About a minute later, Miss Simpson saw a large V-shaped wash in the water, as if X were moving along just below the surface. It made straight out into the centre of the Loch, at "about the speed of an outboard-motor-boat." When it reached the middle of the Loch, there was a large splash, and circular ripples spread out until they broke on the shore. After that, no further indication of X was seen.

33. December 25, 1933. In Clayhole Bay.

*Time*, about 8 a.m. *Weather*, clear.

*Witnesses*, Mr. John Cameron, Fort Augustus (*second sighting*). (L.)

Mr. D. McIntosh. (L.)

<sup>93</sup> Miss Simpson told me that she had seen X on several other occasions, but doubted her ability to furnish accurate details of them.

[Clayhole Bay, which is not named on the 6-inch Ordnance sheet, is about 4 miles from Fort Augustus towards Invermoriston, and on the western side of Gobhar Sciathach—the promontory between Easter and Wester Port Clair.]

Mr. Cameron and Mr. McIntosh were driving in a motor-lorry along the Loch road (which runs close to Clayhole Bay) and caught sight of X lying about 30 yards from the shore, with its head (they considered) towards them. Mr. Cameron ran down to the shore to get a closer view; but as he did so X, apparently startled by the noise of the engine, swung very quickly round—making a great commotion in the water—and disappeared.

From the disturbance created, they deduced that X's bulk below water much exceeded that of the portion visible. This showed as a dark hump about 10 feet long, and rising some 3 feet above the surface. Mr. McIntosh also noticed, about 6 feet in front of the hump, "a clear and definite break in the water," which he considered might have been produced by the head.

34. December 26, 1933. Off Corrie's Cave.

*Time*, about 10:15 a.m. *Weather*, clear.

*Witness*, Dr. J. Kirton, Fort Augustus (*second sighting*). (L.)

On this occasion Dr. Kirton saw X from the road at the head of Inchnacardoch Bay. It was about half a mile from him, and in a line

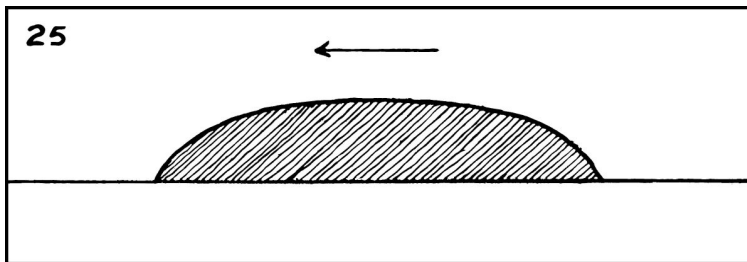


Fig. 25.—DR. KIRTON'S SECOND SKETCH.

with Corrie's Cave. He was driving towards Port Clair, and put on speed, hoping to get a closer view; but, while he was passing Cherry Island, X was observed to sink. His son (aged 11), and a boy friend, were with him; and all saw X distinctly.

“This time the head was not visible, only the dark body—in shape and size like an upturned rowing boat. The dimensions—10 feet—in the Press report ‘quoted’ from me, were due to the reporter’s imagination, but were fairly accurate, I should say. Seen by me for about two (2) minutes.”

[Fig. 25 is from an outline sketch furnished by Dr. Kirton.]

35. December 27, 1933. Off Jack’s Quarry.

*Time*, about 11 a.m. *Weather*, clear, Loch like glass.

*Witness*, Mr. G. Jamieson, Fort Augustus. (L.)

Jack’s Quarry is about 3 miles from Fort Augustus on the road towards Invermoriston. Mr. Jamieson was driving a van in that direction, and caught sight of X within 100 yards of the shore. The road at this point runs close above the Loch, and overlooks it.

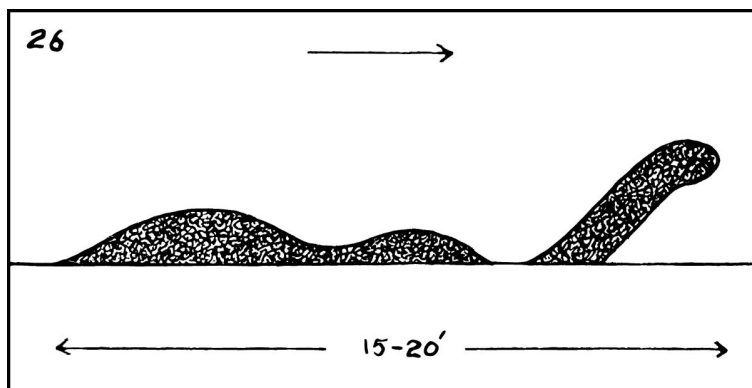


Fig. 26.—MR. JAMIESON’S SKETCH.

Fig. 26 is from a sketch which he made later. X was swimming rapidly and obliquely across the Loch, heading more or less due S. Head, neck, and two humps were visible above the surface. All were greyish-black in colour, and the skin appeared “rough and mottled, or knobbly.” He estimated that the larger hump stood about 3 feet above water, and the smaller 2 feet; while he put the total length overall at 15-20 feet. From the attendant disturbance in the water, however, he considered that there must also be a considerable length submerged, in rear of the larger hump.

Noticing a boat on the other side of the Loch—towards which X was heading—he sounded his horn to attract the crew’s attention. At

the sound, X turned its head quickly, and dived below. In a second or two it had completely disappeared, leaving a well-marked wash still showing.

[The foregoing account is based upon one which appeared in the *Scotsman*, 1.i.34. In a letter—12.i.34—to me he confirmed the accuracy of this account, and also mentioned that he caught a glimpse of X on January 10 of this year, but only saw “a portion of the big hump disappearing below the surface.”]

36. December 30, 1933. Near Fort Augustus.

*Time*, about 11:45 a.m. *Weather*, overcast, windy, and cold, with snow showers.

*Witness*, Mr. W. U. Goodbody, Invergarry. (L. and P.)

[Mr. Goodbody is a member of the Ness Fishery Board. He sent me a letter giving full details of his experience, and I subsequently interviewed him in London. The following is an extract from his letter.]

“None of the accounts ... which I saw in the daily papers were accurate. So I will state the exact facts for your information.

“On December 30, 1933, my two daughters and I were motor-ing very slowly along the north shore of Loch Ness. About two miles east of Fort Augustus my elder daughter saw something with two large humps sticking high out of the water. It was about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the way across the Loch. As she looked, it sank much lower. When I first saw it a minute or two later I thought the projections were large fins. As it changed its position and came nearer we saw that the projections were humps, not fins. The number of these which were visible varied, either by reason of the animal partially submerging or changing its position. At one time I counted eight and my daughter nine.

“Its motion was very slow for the most part. We could not see how it propelled itself. Once when it turned it seemed to make a swirl at one end. This involved the last three humps. Finally it speeded up and went out of sight in a snowstorm.

“I cannot say that I saw any head or neck. When I was looking through the field-glasses, I thought I saw what might be a long thin neck raised for an instant. But it happened so quickly that it might have been a branch blowing across the glasses. I saw no head. I

do not regard our evidence on this point as of any value, and so informed the newspaper men. But of the existence of the creature and of the projecting humps there could be no doubt whatever, for we watched it carefully for forty minutes. Moreover, we followed it a measured  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile along the road.

“Its size is hard to estimate. You know how deceiving distance is on water. ... We estimated its distance away when first seen at 700 yards, and, at its nearest point, at about 400 yards. Its humps appeared about 1 foot high (at least double that when first seen by my daughter) and its visible length about 16 feet. A few ducks flew by while we were watching, which gave us a standard of comparison. ... Then, we are accustomed daily to looking at boats and other objects over water, and could mentally compare their sizes and distances, but of course there remains room for error.

“What the rest of the animal looked like we could not conjecture. The swirl on turning indicated that there could not be a very thick body under the last three humps. On the other hand, it must have considerable thickness to project so much above the water as it did when first seen.

“Some days later my wife and daughters and two other witnesses saw for a short time from above Urquhart Castle something of the “upturned boat” type. It was a long way off, being out from the opposite point of Urquhart Bay. It seemed to be going along quite fast with a kind of wobbly motion. There was a disturbance in the water on one side. They said it projected much higher out of the water than an upturned boat would have done. Their guess was, that it was 4 or 5 feet high. They hurried round the bay to get a nearer view, but when they reached the point it had gone.

“I find it hard to reconcile these two descriptions as being of the same animal. Each type has been seen by many witnesses. Yet it seems more probable that it is one creature in different positions than that there are two strange creatures of different types in the Loch. It is a matter for naturalists to determine, if any could be found to take an interest. ...

“The humps which we saw looked clearly structural, and not at all like the undulations of a straight body. It has been suggested to me that we saw a log, a family of otters or seals, a group of ducks or

cormorants. These suggestions are understandable, but quite mistaken. I will not waste your time by discussing them.

"I agree with you that the assumption that what we and such a host of other people have seen in Loch Ness is a seal is inconsistent with practically all the evidence. But I do not deny the possibility of a seal being in Loch Ness."

[When I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Goodbody, some time after this letter was written, I made a sketch, under his direction, of the line of humps and the "neck"—if it was a neck (fig. 27*a*). He told me that he saw, or thought he saw, something long and curved whip out of the water and go back again, some distance in front of the leading hump—but this happened so quickly that he only had a passing impression of it. If it was a neck, it was much thinner than the humps.

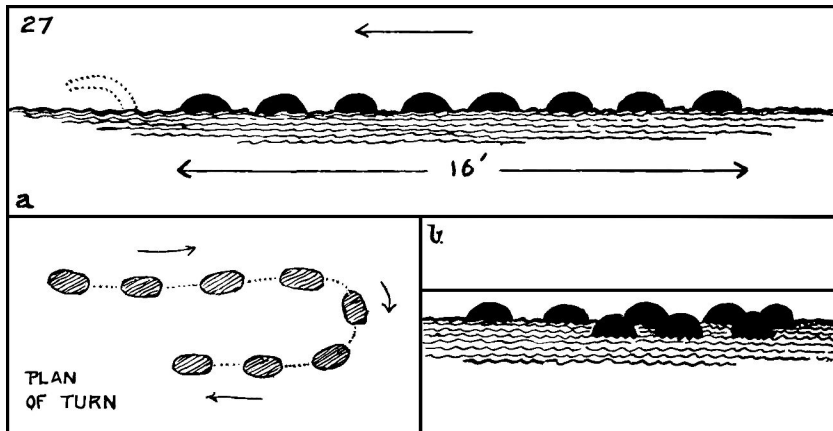


Fig. 27.—X AS SEEN BY MR. GOODBODY.

(*a*, WHEN MOVING FORWARD. *b*, WHEN TURNING.)

He also told me that both he and his daughter were much puzzled by the varying number of the humps. They counted them again and again, and found that their results neither agreed nor remained constant. The overall length, at any particular time, varied in proportion to the number of humps visible.

Fig. 27*b* is based upon one in the *Illustrated London News* (13.i.34; drawn by Mr. G. Davis under Mr. Goodbody's supervision) showing the appearance of the line of humps when X was turning in a short semi-circle. It was on such occasions that Mr. Goodbody remarked

what he speaks of as “the swirl on turning ... under the last three humps.”]

37. January 5, 1934. Near Abriachan.

*Time*, about 1:30 a.m. *Weather*, calm, bright moonlight.

*Witness*, Mr. A. Grant, Edinburgh. (L.)

[Considerable interest—and, I am bound to add, some incredulity<sup>94</sup>—was aroused by the wide publication, on January 6, 1934, of Mr. Grant’s statement that, early on the previous morning, an unusual creature had crossed the road near Abriachan in front of his motorcycle, and plunged into the Loch. I communicated with him, and he confirmed the general accuracy of the account appearing in the *Scotsman*, on which the following is based.]

Mr. Grant was going from Inverness to his father’s house at Polmailly, Drumnadrochit. Near Abriachan he noticed a large black object on the far (northern) side of the road. [The moon<sup>95</sup> was high, and behind him. In answer to my enquiry, he told me that he could have read a newspaper by its light, or recognised a man standing 15 yards off.] When he was almost level with the object, it apparently took fright, made two great bounds across the road, and plunged into the Loch.

He described it as from 15 to 20 feet long, with a small head on a long neck, a bulky body, with two slight humps on it, and a long tail, rounded at the end. The body appeared to have four flippers. The head resembled that of an eel, with large eyes set near the crown. The creature “loped” across the road in the manner of a sea-lion; arching its back, and resting on front and back flippers alternately.

[According to a later report in the *Scotsman*—22.i.34—a party of five students from the Edinburgh College of Art examined the scene of Mr. Grant’s adventure on the following day, and found two tracks—as of feet, or flippers, and 5 feet apart—at the place where the creature had gone down into the Loch.

Mr. Grant’s account is comparable with Mr. Spicer’s—but the latter’s experience occurred in broad daylight, and he enjoyed the advan-

<sup>94</sup> A rumour reached me, from more than one quarter, that the story was a mere hoax. In justice to Mr. Grant, I take this opportunity of stating that, while I acquit my informants of malice, I am quite convinced that the rumour itself is utterly groundless.

<sup>95</sup> Her altitude was then approximately 38°, and her azimuth 142°. Age, 19 days.



tage of being able to compare his observations with those made by a second witness. On the other hand, Mr. Grant was much nearer to what he saw. I entirely accept his story—but, in view of all the evidence available respecting X's size, I can only suppose that he either underestimated the size of the creature he saw, or that it was not X at all; although in the latter event I can offer no suggestion as to what it really was. In a letter to me—29.i.34—he remarks:

“A margin to the creature's size can be allowed as it crossed in a diagonal direction. Its total length could not have been less than fifteen or more than twenty. I should say it was about eighteen feet long.”

He adds that the flippers, especially the front pair, were “definitely strong.”

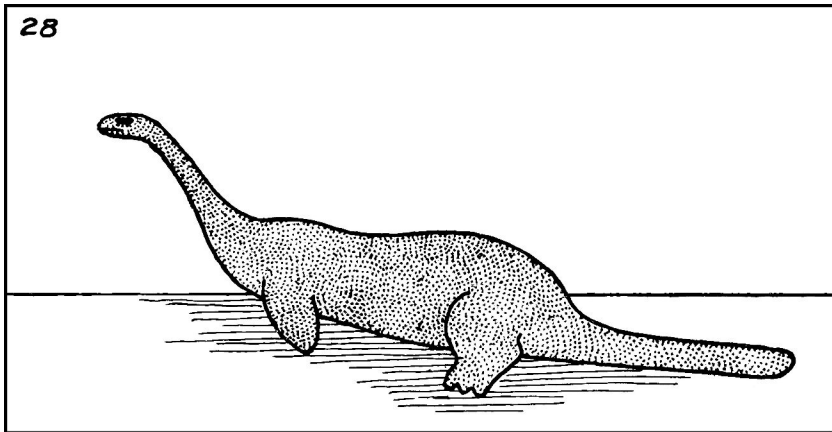


Fig. 28.—CREATURE SEEN BY MR. GRANT.

A sketch by Mr. Grant appeared in the *Daily Mail* of January 8, 1934; and he sent me another (fig. 28) which he regarded as more accurate “as I have taken my time over it.”]

38. January 30, 1934. Off Does.

*Time*, 3:25 p.m. *Weather*, calm, Loch like glass.

*Witness*, Mr. Howard Carson, Johore Bheru, Malaya. (L.)

[I owe Mr. Carson's evidence to the kindness of Mr. George Mackenzie, Editor of the *Northern Chronicle*. An account of Mr. Carson's experience appeared in that paper on February 14, 1934, but his

name was not given—so that the account, from my point of view, was valueless. Mr. Mackenzie, however, is a personal friend of Mr. Carson; and I received from him a letter containing further information, and also Mr. Carson's consent to the publication of his name. The following account is extracted from that in the *Northern Chronicle*.]

“On January 30 I was proceeding in my car from Inverness to Errogie via Dores and had arrived at 3:50 p.m. at a spot ... about 300 feet above the level of the loch, which was dead calm. ...

“As I was about to stop to gaze upon the beauty of the scene, I observed a tremendous streak of white foam ... the point at which this disturbance occurred was about as far south of Torr Point, Bona, as the loch is wide.<sup>96</sup> It was well to my own side of the half-way line, so that I estimated it to be about 500 yards from the shore.

“At first I thought it was a motor-boat, as the wash was exactly like that set up by such a boat. ... Then I saw ‘it’ [X].

“Just ahead of the wash I could see three objects rising out of the water—two of them the humps reputed to be on the back of the ‘monster,’ and the third what appeared to be the head slightly forward. It was proceeding in the direction of Bona at a very slow pace despite the wash, and, although I watched it for ten minutes, when it disappeared, it did not seem to move more than fifty yards in that time. The wash was generated from a point behind the head and again from a point behind the second hump, as if powerful flippers were at work and, perhaps, a tail. Twice this wash subsided somewhat, and finally subsided altogether; when the object sank without making any further wash or disturbance.

“In my observation the first thing that surprised me was the proximity of one hump to the other. As a purely personal expression of opinion, I would say that when the creature moved forward the distance between the two humps became greater than when it was at comparative rest. I conclude from that that when it is moving at a fairly fast speed the humps will probably disappear altogether.<sup>97</sup>

“What I took to be the head was higher out of water than the humps, which appeared equal in size. I could not get a clear view

of the head, because it was in shadow, and was moving, but the humps were clearly defined.

“Occasionally the wash at the left side was more intensive than the wash at the right side, as if it were kicking more with one ‘paddle’ than with the other. After the creature had finally disappeared, I went to the loch level and took bearings. There was nothing on the loch which could in any way have misled me.”

[Mr. Carson, who is an engineer, adopted the excellent plan of noting X’s proportions, thus obtaining a representation of it which did not depend upon any estimate of its actual dimensions. The resulting sketch—re-drawn from the original pencil version—is shown in fig. 29.

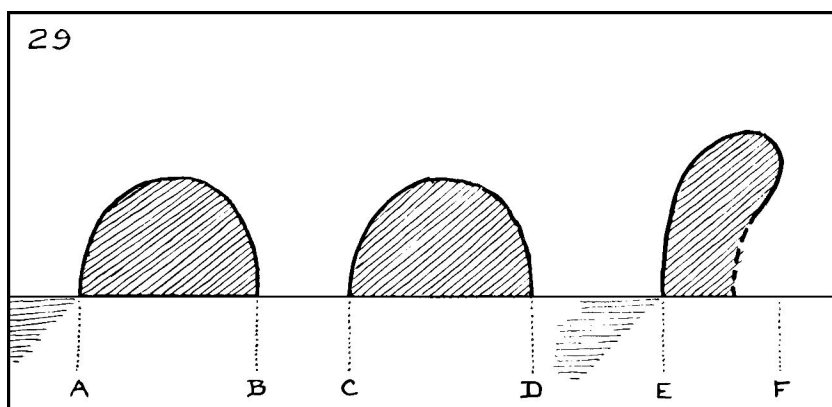


Fig. 29.—MR. CARSON’S SKETCH.

The distances between the lettered points under the sketch are tabulated, on the original, as follows:

“AB—4 units. Say 1 unit—9 inches.

CD—4 units.

BC—2 units.

DE—3 units.

EF—3 units.

Height of 2 main humps—3 units.

Height of front hump or head varied to 4 units.”

<sup>96</sup> About 2,200 yards, at this point.

<sup>97</sup> This is in no way borne out by Mr. Morrison’s observations. See p. 55.

He also notes that when X moved forward the distance BC enlarged to 3-4 units. The wash, which appeared to be generated at points A and E, extended for more than twice the total overall length—which, accepting his suggestion that the probable length of his “units” was 9 inches, would be some 12 feet.]

39. (Evening of) February 22, 1934. Off Fort Augustus.

*Witness*, Mrs. J. MacDonald, Fort Augustus. (L.)

[This account is taken verbatim from the *Scotsman*, 27.ii.34. Mrs. MacDonald confirmed its accuracy, but added no further details.]

“Mrs. MacDonald said that the object she saw was travelling at a high speed across the loch at almost exactly the same spot [‘well out from the mouth of the river’—the Oich—at Fort Augustus]. Whatever the creature was, she declared, it must be of huge proportions, for the waves it sent out were very much like those caused by a steamer, and there was no ship of any kind within miles, and the loch was flat calm.”

40. February 24, 1934. Off Fort Augustus.

*Time*, 10 a.m.

*Witness*, Mrs. Hill, Fort Augustus.

[This account—like the preceding, and for the same reason—is taken verbatim from the *Scotsman*, 27.ii.34.]

“Mrs. Hill stated that when coming across the Oich Bridge at 10 a.m., she saw an object like a huge swan well out from the mouth of the river. Here the loch is a mile wide and very deep. What impressed Mrs. Hill most was that the long neck seemed to be far too slender for the huge rounded body, part of which was also visible. The monster was about 500 yards distant at the time.”

41. February 25, 1934. In Urquhart Bay.

*Time*, 4:20 p.m. *Weather*, calm and bright, no wind, a very slight ripple on Loch.

*Witness*, Mrs. M. MacLennan, Strathconan. (L.)

Mrs. MacLennan and her husband were motoring from Fort Augustus towards Inverness. Mr. MacLennan was driving, and Mrs.

MacLennan (who was hoping to see X) kept her attention “rivetted on the water.” After passing Altsigh, however, she tired of this, and gave it up—but on reaching a point of the road near (but above) Urquhart Castle, and commanding a fine view of the Loch and of Urquhart Bay, she resumed her scrutiny. Her account continues:

“Just at that instant a long black object rose from the water perpendicularly till (I should say) about six feet (roughly) of a rounded black column appeared, and on the top a small rather pointed head, which turned from one side to the other as if surveying its surroundings. Then it submerged at once in the same perpendicular way, leaving a large distinct wash.

“On seeing the object I called to my husband ... but by the time he had stopped the car and got out a telescope he always carries when going to Inverness, it had disappeared and only the wash remained. My husband said that only some very large object could have caused such a wash ... I should say (but I am not much of a judge of distance) that the distance was less than a quarter of a mile, and that without my glasses<sup>98</sup> on I could never have seen the head move, although I should probably have seen the long black neck with the naked eye.”

[I originally intended to terminate the evidence with Mrs. MacLennan’s sighting; but while this book was in the press I received an account from Miss K. MacDonald, Inverness (already referred to as having seen a curious creature in the Ness in February 1932), of her having sighted X, in various successive aspects, on May 1, 1934. As no other witness has seen X in more than one aspect on the same occasion, I felt bound to include her account.

In passing, it may be noted that in the interval between February 25 (Mrs. MacLennan’s sighting) and May 1, X was sighted (according to Press reports) on 10 occasions, by a total of some 23 persons. There is nothing particularly novel in any versions of these reports which I have seen—and as, in consequence of the date-limit I originally set myself, I have not verified the particulars of later sightings, I do not propose to give details of them here.]

<sup>98</sup> Eye-glasses. Mrs. MacLennan speaks of them as a powerful, long-sighted pair.

42. May 1, 1934. Between Lochend and Abriachan.

*Time*, about 6:30 a.m. *Weather*, clear, strong sunshine at intervals. Loch calm.

*Witness*, Miss K. MacDonald, Inverness.

Miss MacDonald first noticed X rising out of water at a distance of some 30-40 yards from her, appearing as a "brownish drab-coloured hump." [Fig. 30*a*, which is based upon a sketch by Miss MacDonald, shows X's outline at this time.]

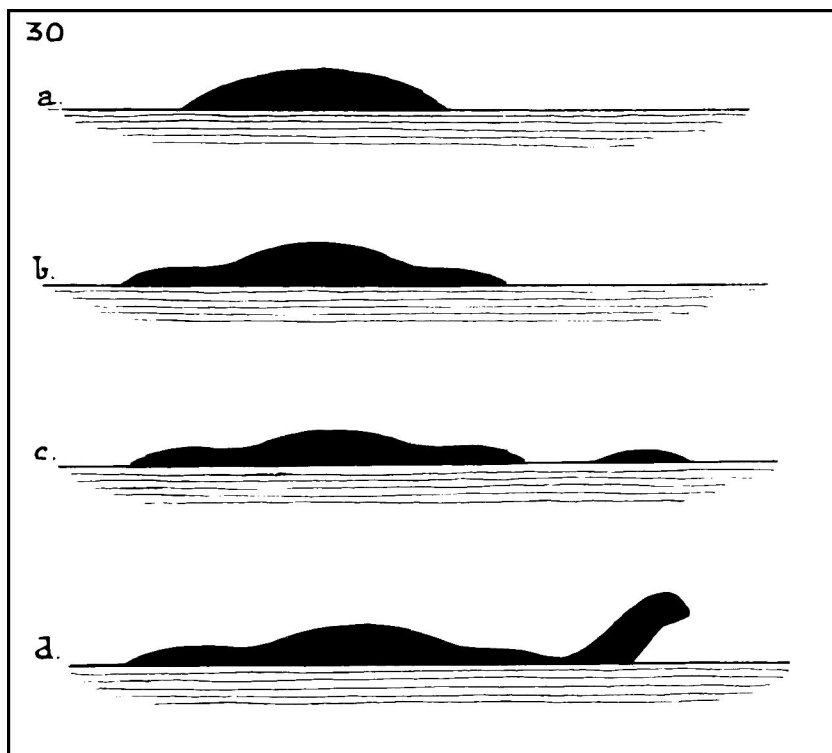


Fig. 30.—MISS K. MACDONALD'S SKETCHES.

The hump then flattened out, presenting the aspect shown at *b* in the figure. This process continued, until the body assumed the shape shown at *c*, of a good-sized hump with a smaller hump at either end. Opposite the two latter humps there was continuous "kicking and splashing" in the water, apparently caused by limbs. At the same time, a fourth small hump appeared, with a water-space between it and other three.

Finally, this fourth hump was lifted clear of the water, and proved to be X's neck and head, as shown at *d*. The head was quite small. Head and neck undulated up and down "as if by elastic."

Miss MacDonald watched the creature for some 10 minutes, during which time it remained nearly stationary, only advancing a few yards. When doing so, a marked swirl was seen at the rear end, which Miss MacDonald considered to indicate the presence of a powerful tail [she did not actually see this]. Finally, X sank and did not reappear.

[Before concluding this chapter, I will add a short note of some information in regard to X which was given to me by Mr. A. Ross, the pier-master at Temple Pier, Drumnadrochit. Mr. Ross told me that he had heard tales of X for some years past, but disbelieved them until he saw it, for the first time, in June 1933. Since then, he had seen it on several occasions; but was doubtful as to the exact particulars of each separate sighting. Speaking generally, he described X as looking like a gigantic eel, some 25 feet or more in length and 5 feet in maximum diameter. When motionless on the surface its back appeared smooth; but when in motion the back curved into a series of humps, like that of a caterpillar. The tail was powerfully used when swimming—and the wash left behind was so strongly marked as to persist for some minutes afterwards.]





## The Various Explanations

So far as I can judge, practically all of the attempts which have hitherto been made to explain the Loch Ness reports have suffered from at least one serious defect; a defect from which I hope that any persevering reader who has reached this point will find himself free. One and all, they have been based upon imperfect—and in many cases, misleading—evidence. Even those who have attempted a synthesis of the facts before framing a theory—and it is painfully obvious that many who rushed into print on the subject have omitted that advisable, but laborious, preliminary—have been forced to depend upon Press reports; which, as I have had occasion to point out, are often inaccurate.

That this defect is common to all the attempted explanations will, I think, be conceded by any unbiased person; but, in my judgment, it is not the only one. To my mind they fail, without exception, to cover the whole of the evidence. Some cover one portion, some another; one or two explain a considerable amount of it, and are deserving of serious examination; others have obviously been devised *ad hoc*, on the evidence of some particular sighting, and fail lamentably if applied to the details of any other; some, again, are obviously ridiculous. But, one and all, they have serious—and, in my opinion, fatal—defects.

They may be divided into two main groups:

1. Those which dismiss all reports as without foundation, on the ground that they have originated in:

- (a) Deliberate deception.
- (b) Mass-hallucination.

2. Those which regard the reports as a superstructure of imagination raised upon a foundation of fact, that foundation being:

- (a) Some inanimate object or natural phenomenon.
- (b) Some known, but unrecognised, living creature.

Taking these groups in order, we have first:

## 1 (a) Deliberate deception

This suggestion, of course, was more or less bound to be made; and, equally, to take the form of anonymous innuendoes. No one, so far as I know, has yet come forward openly to champion the assertion that the “monster” is a pure hoax; and if anyone is contemplating such action he may be interested to hear of the difficulties which he will encounter, and of the leading points which he must explain away.

The life of a deliberate hoax is usually short; and the more public attention it arouses, the sooner it is exposed. Such classical examples as the Berners Street hoax, and the Fortsas sale, were exposed—or, rather, stood self-revealed—within twenty-four hours; and it was undoubtedly the overwhelming interest aroused by “Louis de Rouge-mont’s” narrative which caused the *Wide World Magazine* to disclaim its sponsorship when only four of the ten monthly instalments had appeared.

The modern hoaxer—working, of necessity, more or less single-handed—depends, for more than ephemeral success, upon arousing a considerable, but not embarrassing, amount of public and/or official interest. On one celebrated occasion, a bogus Sultan of Zanzibar (preceded by an equally bogus Admiralty telegram) visited H.M.S. *Dreadnought*, and was received with full honours, including a salute; but it is safe to say that a round of such visits, if attempted, would have terminated with the second. Press enterprise takes care of that; and Press rivalries, aided by rapid communications, make it impossible for any newspaper to indulge in the once-popular pastime of publishing manufactured news. The days when a junto of London wits could use the Press to laugh poor Partridge, the almanac-maker, out of existence have long gone by—and Locke’s “Moon Hoax” of 1835, which tripled the circulation of the New York *Sun*, and was almost universally accepted for some months, owed its success to the fact that it could not be immediately contradicted, since it was based upon (alleged) observations made by Sir John Herschel, who was then at the Cape of Good Hope.

No modern newspaper, of course, would play such a trick upon its readers; none would encourage a private hoaxer, or countenance him for an hour after his veracity was disproved, or even seriously questioned; and none would hesitate, I think, to use all its resources to

expose what it believed to be a hoax—the “news-value” of an “exposure” is always high.

Yet the fact remains that, in the case of the Loch Ness “monster,” no such exposure has appeared, and there does not seem the least likelihood of its appearance; for the excellent reason, in my submission, that you cannot expose what has never occurred. The theory that the “monster” is a pure hoax postulates many years of preparation by some obscure and affluent half-wit, the subornation and active assistance of many Loch Ness residents and visitors, and the tacit complicity of the entire Press. Nor is the matter bettered, to any considerable extent, by assuming that the reports were originally set on foot by some practical joker who started the snowball rolling, and that it has since run on by its own momentum, gathering bulk as it rolls.

I would recommend anyone who proposes to denounce the “monster” as a hoax to do as I did—go North, examine the locality, and interview the witnesses. While doing so, he should keep his suspicions to himself, for fear of accidents; and I am confident that, before he left, he would be ashamed of ever having held them.

Having said this, I do not propose to spend much time in discussing what I regard as baseless and, at best, ill-natured rumours. Here is a typical specimen, taken from a leader in the *New York Herald Tribune* (23.ii.34):

“... our own private investigators at Loch Ness have reported the curious, though perhaps irrelevant, circumstance that a large new resort hotel was opened on the shore of the lake about the time the monster was first extensively reported.”

I have not been fortunate enough to discover anyone, either in the vicinity or elsewhere, who has ever heard of this “resort hotel”; no doubt some conspiracy of silence exists. Such establishments, of course, are always built and inaugurated in circumstances of profound secrecy, only to be unravelled by the acumen of “private investigators.”

Casual slanders of this kind were probably at the bottom of the following letter, which appeared in the *Scotsman* (21.xi.33):

“Scottish Travel Association,  
37 George Street, Edinburgh, 2.    *October 20, 1933.*

“SIR,—I think it perhaps advisable to state that, contrary to rumours which are circulating, the Loch Ness ‘monster’ was not ‘invented’ by this Association as a means of publicity for bringing people to Scotland.—I am, &c.

“DOUGLAS G. RUSSELL,  
“*Secretary and Manager.*”

It was, of course, inevitable that the “monster” reports, genuine in themselves, should give rise to various hoaxes. Picture-postcards—showing views of Loch Ness scenery, with alleged photographs of the “monster” more or less successfully superimposed—were soon on sale everywhere<sup>99</sup> the *Mauretania* was widely credited, in the Press, with having sighted a “rival to the Loch Ness monster” in the Caribbean; and on April 1, 1934, the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* came out with four most convincing photographs, one of which showed the “monster” being captured with the help of two tugs and a torpedo-net, while another depicted it as on exhibition in Edinburgh, watched from packed stands by a huge crowd. Such proceedings—no doubt legitimate in themselves—can scarcely have encouraged the general public to accept the Loch Ness reports as genuine; and it may therefore be salutary to repeat here that the latter stand on a very different footing.

## 1 (b) Mass-hallucination

The view that the Loch Ness reports originated in some form of mass-hallucination first found expression, so far as I know, in an article by Mr. E. G. Boulenger, Director of the Zoological Society’s Aquarium. Writing in the *Observer* (29.x.33) he remarked:

“The case of the Monster of Loch Ness is worthy of our consideration, if only because it presents a striking example of mass-hallucination. ...

“For countless centuries a wealth of weird and eerie legend has centred round this great inland waterway. ... Any person with the

<sup>99</sup> I have two specimens—one showing X in the Loch, the other on land (near Urquhart Castle). They were probably intended as jokes; but, to my knowledge, many persons have accepted them as genuine photographs from nature (not, of course, from *Nature*).

slightest knowledge of human susceptibility should therefore find no difficulty in understanding how the animal, once being said to have been seen by few persons, should have shortly after revealed itself to many more.”

When I read the article, I had not been to Loch Ness—but I knew something of its configuration; and I was a little disturbed in mind by a statement which met my eye further on:

“In the present instance the possibility of the beast actually being some huge animal must be ruled out, since the loch was, until lately, isolated but for certain subterranean inlets. To-day its extremities join the sea by well-supervised canals, in which a creature of any size would be at once apparent.”

The Loch’s “isolation” has never been mitigated by any “subterranean inlet.” As already noted, if it communicated with the sea in any such fashion its waters could not possibly stand, as they do, some 50 feet above sea-level—nor would they be perfectly fresh. On the other hand, the existence of a practicable, and un-“supervised” access-channel—the River Ness—is entirely overlooked.

However, Mr. Boulenger does not rest his explanation upon mass-hallucination pure and simple. He buttresses it with the suggestion that:

“... the most likely, if disappointing, explanation is to be found in the wreckage of one kind and another often seen in the loch. A gnarled tree-trunk or grass-topped mass of peat might, in the distance, suggest, under certain lighting conditions, a monster of heraldic design and titanic proportions. ... Taking all these considerations into account, it is safe to dismiss the creature as mere ‘moonshine.’ ...”

The theory of mass-hallucination was pushed to even greater lengths by Sir Arthur Keith in a *Daily Mail* article (3.i.34). Much of this was, naturally, devoted to the consideration of Mr. Wetherell’s recently-detected spoor, and need not detain us; while part of the remainder was written under the misconception (apparent, also, in Mr. Boulenger’s article) that the “monster” must be indigenous, and that in consequence relics of its ancestors ought frequently to be found in

the neighbourhood. But the concluding portion of the article is, to my mind, the most remarkable:

“All the laymen who have visited Loch Ness to collect evidence at first hand lay great stress on the number of witnesses that can be produced. ... Strange to say, it is just the great number of witnesses and the discrepancy of their testimony that have convinced professional zoologists that the Loch Ness monster is not a thing of flesh and blood.

“For, seeing that monstrosaurus has been seen by so many people, at so many times and in so many places, then concrete and unmistakable evidence of its existence should have been at our disposal long before now. A live hippopotamus or a dolphin could not hide itself in Loch Ness from prying human eyes for a week, to say nothing of three months.

“The only kind of being whose existence is testified to by scores of witnesses, and which never reaches the dissecting table, belongs to the world of spirits.”

I confess that I can make neither head nor tail of this reasoning. What does Sir Arthur Keith regard as “concrete and unmistakable evidence”? From his reference to the dissecting table, I imagine that nothing less than the “monster’s” carcass will satisfy him—and since attempts on its life are, quite rightly, discouraged by the local police, I fear that he will go unsatisfied.

Again, he complains that the creature has hidden itself from “prying human eyes” for three months. Here he is unquestionably wrong in his facts. As detailed in the previous chapter, during the three months ending January 3—the date of his article—the creature was sighted, on eleven separate days, by a total of twenty-one witnesses.

In view of the Loch’s very considerable size it would, actually, be in no way remarkable if a single creature, however large, were only sighted in its waters at very infrequent intervals. But, as I have shown, the case is far otherwise—and, in fact, Sir Arthur is at some pains to admit this himself, for he goes out of his way to lay emphasis upon the “great number of witnesses” whose testimony is available. This is true enough—and he brings it forward as an argument to prove that the creature has no real existence (how it shows anything of the kind, I do not understand—but we will let that pass). He also contends—in-

correctly, but that is a detail—that no one has seen it for three months past; and this, also, he adduces as an argument that the “monster” does not exist. I could understand his relying on the one or the other argument—but how he can put both forward in a breath, and expect to be taken seriously, I cannot pretend to guess. Slightly condensed, his reasoning comes to this: That many people have seen the creature, demonstrates conclusively that it is invisible—I will never believe it is alive until I handle its dead body.”

Sir Arthur Keith’s article concludes thus:

“I spent my boyhood on the banks of a river which flows into the Moray Firth. I knew many men and women who had seen kelpies in a certain dark pool, not once but many times. Like the Loch Ness monster, kelpies could be seen but not touched. I did not believe in them then, and nothing has happened since to alter my mind.

“I have come to the conclusion that the existence or non-existence of the Loch Ness monster is not a problem for zoologists but for psychologists.”

Possibly. And if the psychologists have any time to spare after solving the problem, they might usefully employ it in studying the mental processes by which this remarkable conclusion was reached. Personally, it would never occur to me (although my descent is part-Scots<sup>100</sup>—and I, too, spent some time in Scotland as a boy) to scout the evidence of numerous reputable witnesses simply because they were Scotsmen, and because of some folk-tale that I had listened to as a lad.

I gather that a conclusion similar to Sir Arthur Keith’s has been expressed, independently, by Professor J. Graham Kerr, who occupies the chair of Zoology at Glasgow University. At least, he is quoted<sup>101</sup> as remarking:

“It is absurd to suppose that an *individual* ‘monster,’ as it is popularly conceived, can exist in Loch Ness. Absurd suggestions by untrained observers have been circulated recently.”

<sup>100</sup> My grandfather, Thomas Skinner (M.D., St. Andrews), is still remembered in Glen Urquhart.

<sup>101</sup> *Daily Express*, 12.xii.33.

At first sight, it would appear that he might conceivably tolerate the presence of a school of monsters, but sets his face sternly against a single one, unprovided with a chaperon. On reflection, it seems more likely that he has overlooked the existence of a channel through which a sea-creature could find its way into the Loch.

Isolated instances of mass-hallucination are not uncommon—Le Bon<sup>102</sup> cites many, and a good example was provided recently by the (imaginary) aeroplane-crash witnessed off Shoreham<sup>103</sup>—but anyone who considers that this theory covers all the evidence available in the case of the Loch Ness “monster” is, in my submission, a very credulous person.

Before taking leave of the ultra-sceptics, it may be as well to touch upon an argument which seems to fascinate some of them.<sup>104</sup> I refer to the question of X’s food-supply. The trend of the argument appears to be, that while Loch Ness shelters, and feeds, large quantities of salmon, it cannot possibly afford sustenance to a single larger creature. I confess that I find this argument far from convincing—and, from my point of view, it is irrelevant. It can scarcely be said to furnish conclusive proof that X does not exist at all; and, if the creature exists, by so doing it demonstrates that it can obtain sufficient food, whatever that food may be.

I turn to the views of those who regard the reports as being, while not entirely imaginative in character, based upon a misapprehension of—

## 2 (a) Some inanimate object or natural phenomenon

I do not propose to discuss the former category at any length. Anyone who has read the evidence will, I think, agree that such theories are sufficiently disposed of by the well-attested fact that X has repeatedly been seen swimming at a considerable speed and producing a well-marked V-shaped wash; and that at other times it has been surrounded, while lying almost motionless at the surface, by an area of

<sup>102</sup> *Psychologie des Foules* (Paris, 1895).

<sup>103</sup> 12.i.34. Several persons believed that they saw a single-seater plane, “painted white, with a red stripe,” plunge into the water about 500 yards from shore.

<sup>104</sup> See, for example, a letter from Mr. W. G. Thomas in the *Daily Express* (Scottish edition), 11.xii.33.



considerable disturbance produced by a paddling action. No inanimate object could exhibit either phenomenon.

The object chiefly favoured, by those who rely on such, is a floating tree-trunk. Photographs of a particularly lifelike specimen received wide Press publicity in December last<sup>105</sup> and a correspondent of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (5.i.34) evolved a truly remarkable theory:

“To account for the periodical floating, possibly the hollow trunk is inhabited by a colony<sup>106</sup> of aquatic creatures. When on a foraging expedition, the tree, relieved of their weight, would rise to the surface. At the first sign of alarm the creatures would rush back to their home, thus causing, by their renewed weight and impetus, the sinking of the monster and the swirling of the waters.”

And, no doubt, when the colonists pine for pastures new they unite their efforts and take their home in tow, working up to a speed of 15 knots or thereabouts.

I have no doubt that a floating log—there are many of these, at times, in the Loch—has occasionally been mistaken for the “monster”; two instances of this have come under my own notice. An Invermoriston resident, Lt.-Col. W. H. Lane, informed me that about a week before my visit a log was brought down the Moriston by a spate, and drifted out from its mouth under the combined influence of the current and an easterly wind. He followed it, with binoculars, until it went ashore on the W. side of the pier. Others near him, unprovided with glasses, were quite certain that it was the “monster.” And Mr. G. Davis (of the *Illustrated London News*) gave me, on his return from Loch Ness, details of a similar experience which befell him at Altsigh. Here, again, a pair of binoculars resolved an apparent “monster” into a floating tree-trunk.<sup>107</sup>

But if anyone, bearing the possibility of such an illusion in mind, will look carefully through the evidence given in the previous chapter,

<sup>105</sup> *Bulletin*, 12.xii.33; *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror*, and *Daily Sketch*, 15.xii.33.

<sup>106</sup> *Query*, bolony.

<sup>107</sup> According to the *Star* (12.xii.34) reports of a living plesiosaurus in Lake Nahuel Huapi, Patagonia, caused considerable stir in Buenos Aires some years ago. Subscriptions were raised and an expedition despatched. The “plesiosaurus” proved to be a half-submerged tree-trunk.

I have little doubt of his agreeing that, whatever those witnesses may have sighted, it was not a tree-trunk—or, for that matter, an inanimate object of any kind. The two main objections to this supposition—the considerable turn of speed exhibited by X, and the “paddling” commotion often observed in its neighbourhood—are quite insuperable.

I have not come across any reference, in print, to the somewhat confusing circumstance that, as a result of extensive road-repairs around the Loch shores, floating tar-barrels are far from uncommon, at present, in its waters. But various other objects have had their advocates; a mass of floating peat (Professor D. M. Watson<sup>108</sup>), a crane,<sup>109</sup> a dead elephant,<sup>110</sup> and an actual upturned boat.<sup>111</sup> In the last two cases, the action of the tide (there are no tides in Loch Ness) or of a “natural spring or geyser” was supposed to bring the object to the surface intermittently!

Some of the natural phenomena which have been put forward as explanations are better deserving of examination. But I do not include among them the following suggestion, with which I was favoured, while at Loch Ness, by a Blackpool resident:

“I am under the impression that the supposed monster is the reflection on the water of some object on one of the surrounding hills. How is it that it is only seen during sunshine?”

I suspect the writer of having had, at the back of his mind, some appropriately-hazy recollection of the “Fata Morgana.”<sup>112</sup> And while it is certainly true that X has most usually been seen under strong sunlight (for which the abnormally fine weather of 1933 is chiefly responsible), Mr. Goodbody (36) and his two daughters—whose view of it was occasionally interrupted by snow-squalls—would not, I fancy, assent unreservedly to the statement that it had never been seen in any other circumstances.

<sup>108</sup> *Scotsman*, 18.x.33.

<sup>109</sup> *Hexham Courant*, 9.xii.33.

<sup>110</sup> *Times*, 8.i.34.

<sup>111</sup> *Daily Record and Mail*, 4.xi.33 (letter from a “well-known Glasgow citizen,” a native of Abriachan).

<sup>112</sup> Occasionally visible in the Straits of Messina. During calm, hazy weather, with the rising sun at an altitude of about 45°, suitably-placed spectators see the images of neighbouring buildings, etc., apparently floating on the surface of the strait. The effect is produced by a combination of direct reflection with partial refraction.

A personal experience related in the correspondence columns of the *Daily Telegraph*<sup>113</sup> deserves more attention. Observers on board a steamer in one of the Norwegian fiords noticed a series of rounded black objects, close in-shore and apparently following the vessel.

“Some passengers thought that the three or four black objects were seals; others rejected the seal theory, on account of the regularity with which they kept in line, and plumped for a sea-serpent.

“Eventually, it occurred to many of us that we were looking at a purely wave effect on the shelving shore, caused by the boat’s motion.<sup>114</sup> The absence of any connecting wave between these black objects and the boat would be due, probably, to the great depth of water, which affects wave-lengths, while the blackness would be the result of the shading effect of the steep southern wall [of the fiord].”

It is conceivable that a similar illusion might be produced, in Loch Ness, by the wash of a passing steamer; but the presence of the vessel herself would, I imagine, very soon undeceive the most casual observer. I have heard the theory mooted in connection with the sighting of X near the *Grant Hay* (17) and the *Scott II* (26)—the assumption being, in each case, that the ship’s motion had produced, in some unexplained manner, a secondary wash some distance astern of her, and separated from the ordinary bow-wave by an area of calm. I could imagine this occurring in a very shallow canal—but its occurrence in deep water is quite incompatible with what I know of wave-motion. In the Norwegian case just quoted, it is evident from the context that the “three or four black objects” were seen just where the line of diverging V-shaped bow-wave would impinge on the shore. But the line of humps seen astern of the *Grant Hay* varied its distance from her, repeatedly altered its aspect and finally proceeded in the opposite direction; and while the *Scott II* has a peculiar fore-foot, whose wave might have a vertical component,<sup>115</sup> the wave which she saw approached from the side of the Loch, turned to follow her, and finally remained motionless

<sup>113</sup> 14.xii.33.

<sup>114</sup> I.e. the steamer’s.

<sup>115</sup> Her bow is of “icebreaker” pattern, receding sharply below the waterline at an angle of about 45° to the vertical.

astern. And these are (I think) the only cases, in the evidence now under discussion, to which the “wave-effect” theory is at all applicable.

In passing, I may mention that Mr. W. Cranston, the proprietor of the Foyers Hotel, informed me that a “monster” once sighted by a lady visitor was most undoubtedly produced by a sudden flaw of wind striking the surface of the Loch.

Before leaving the explanations based upon natural phenomena in order to discuss those which suppose X to be a known, but unrecognised, living creature, I should like to touch upon one which forms, in a sense, a connecting-link between the two classes. That is, the supposition that the “monster” is a well-known creature, or creatures, of quite small size, magnified and distorted by the effect of a local mirage. There is more to be said for this supposition than appears likely at first sight. How much more, will appear from the following account by a Loch Ness observer who was, at first, completely misled by an illusion of this kind. It is taken from a letter<sup>116</sup> addressed to the Ness Fishery Board by Mr. A. Campbell, water-bailiff at Fort Augustus.

“One day early last month,<sup>117</sup> at about half-past nine in the morning, I was watching this end of the Loch. The light was very uncertain, there being a fairly thick haze on the water, and along with this the sun was shining directly in my eye through the mist, making the visibility very bad.

“I had not been watching for more than a minute before I noticed a strange object on the surface about six hundred yards from where I stood. It seemed to be about 30 feet long, and what I took to be the head was fully 5 feet above the surface of the Loch. The creature, if such it was, and at the time I felt certain of it, seemed to be watching two drifters passing out of the Canal and into Loch Ness; and, whether it was due to imagination or not, I could have sworn that it kept turning its head and also its body very quickly, in much the same way as a cormorant does on rising to the surface. I saw this for fully a minute, then the object vanished as if it had sunk out of sight. ... I ran back to where my boat was anchored;

<sup>116</sup> Dated October 28, 1933. I have the permission of both parties to make use of what I regard as an interesting and valuable piece of negative evidence.

but by the time I got back to where I could see the object—if it had re-appeared—there was no sign of it.<sup>118</sup> ...

“Last Friday I was watching the Loch at the same place and about the same time of day. The weather was almost identical—practically calm and the sun shining through a hazy kind of mist. In a short time something very like what I have described came into my line of vision and at roughly the same distance from where I stood.

“But the light was improving all the time, and in a matter of seconds I discovered that what I took to be the Monster was nothing more than a few cormorants, and what seemed to be the head was a cormorant standing in the water and flapping its wings, as they often do. The other cormorants, which were strung out in a line behind the leading bird, looked in the poor light and at first glance just like the body or humps of the Monster, as it has been described by various witnesses.

“But the most important thing was, that owing to the uncertain light the bodies of the birds were magnified out of all proportion to their proper size.<sup>119</sup> This mirage-like effect I have often seen on Loch Ness, although not exactly in the same form as I have just described. Other people, who know the Loch, can verify my statement as to the mirage,<sup>120</sup> but it only occurs under certain conditions and if the Loch is calm. Then it gives every object—from, say, a gull or a bottle to an empty barrel—a very grotesque appearance provided that such objects are far enough away from the observer. ...”

I asked Mr. Campbell what the “certain conditions” were. He replied that:

<sup>117</sup> September 7, 1933.

<sup>118</sup> An account of Mr. Campbell’s experience thus far, on the assumption that what he had seen was undoubtedly X, appeared in the *Scotsman*, 17.x.33. His name was not mentioned.

<sup>119</sup> This effect has often been noticed. See, for example, the account in Admiral Somerville’s book, *The Chart Makers*, and a letter in the *Times* of 6.i.34, from Mr. J. H. Orton.

<sup>120</sup> An article in the *Glasgow Herald* (18.i.34) by Dr. G. A. Frank Knight, F.R.S.E., remarks that mirages are frequently seen on Loch Ness.

(a) The Loch must be dead calm.

(b) Heat haze must be present. This may occur at any time of day (in summer only) and last for half an hour or so.

He added, that the mirage is more noticeable if the observer is at or near Loch-level; if above this, the effect is not nearly so pronounced.

My interview with Mr. Campbell took place during my first circuit of the Loch; and thereafter I bore his experience in mind, and was particular to ascertain from the witnesses I interviewed (without, of course, putting leading questions) whether any haze was present at the time of their observations. As will be seen from the details of the evidence, in all except one or two instances it was entirely absent.<sup>121</sup> Even if I had not known of Mr. Campbell's experience, I think I should have been cautious about accepting evidence obtained in the peculiar conditions—haze, low sun and bad light—which he encountered; quite apart from the fact that on the first occasion, when he imagined that he had seen the “monster,” the element of “expectant attention” was, in my opinion, certainly present. On the other hand, his candid examination of the illusion he experienced does him credit, while it emphasises the necessity for taking careful note of the meteorological conditions prevailing at the time of any reported sighting. But, in my judgment, it leaves the main body of evidence entirely unaffected.

Finally, I come to the views of those who consider that the Loch Ness monster is, actually—

## 2 (b) Some known, but unrecognised, living creature or creatures

In discussing how far any of these views agree with the evidence, I shall leave out of account, for the time being, a small part of the latter—the statements of Mr. Spicer (9), Mrs. MacLennan (11), and Mr. Grant (37). These relate to encounters on land; and this circumstance, in itself, would effectively exclude every theory except two—that X is a seal, or possibly a crocodile. But while it would be very convenient for me to dismiss the remaining theories in this drum-head style, such

<sup>121</sup> Mr. Campbell emphasised this point himself, in speaking of the perfect conditions for observation enjoyed by Comdr. Meiklem (10b) and Mr. Russell (25).

a proceeding would scarcely be fair to their authors. Consequently, while reserving the right to use the land-sightings (in the manner of a casting-vote) when necessary, I shall at present examine the various theories in the light of that portion of the evidence which relates to X as it has been observed in the Loch itself.

The theories may first be divided into two groups—those which resolve X into a number of similar, comparatively small creatures (generally swimming or floating in line) and those which regard it as a single large creature.

The former category includes aquatic birds, salmon, otters and porpoises. I propose to discuss the merits of these candidates briefly, in that order.

#### AQUATIC BIRDS

Mr. Campbell's "monster"—which he resolved into a line of cormorants floating on the water, magnified and distorted by mirage—has already been mentioned. Mr. Milne (3) has described to me an incident which he witnessed in the middle of August 1933. He was watching the Loch in company with a number of visitors, and he noticed four merganser taking-off from the water one after the other, causing considerable commotion. The spectacle was at once hailed, by the crowd, with exclamations of "Look, there's the monster!" And my Blackpool correspondent, already mentioned,<sup>122</sup> remarks:

"I have seen on the sea at Fleetwood great flocks of birds in mass formation in the shape of sea-serpents. They disappear from view by skimming along the water-edge."

That such appearances may have temporarily deceived casual (and expectant) observers is perfectly possible; but their champions would, I think, be puzzled to point out any case, among the evidence given here, to which they were even *prima facie* applicable.

It may be noted that on the publication of Mr. Wilson's photograph (see frontispiece), Dr. W. T. Calman suggested<sup>123</sup> that this might represent a grebe, or other diving bird. Mr. Wilson at once pointed out<sup>124</sup>

<sup>122</sup> See p. 91.

<sup>123</sup> *Daily Mail*, 21.iv.34.

<sup>124</sup> *Daily Mail*, 23.iv.34.

that what he saw was certainly much too large to be anything of the kind.

### SALMON

As is well known, salmon are normally plentiful in Loch Ness,<sup>125</sup> and have hitherto been accepted as the largest living creatures which it contains. It is natural, therefore, that sceptics should look in their direction for the origin of the “monster” reports. Witness the following extract from a letter<sup>126</sup> to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (27.xi.33):

“... The Loch Ness ‘Monster’ is simply a rise of fish, which I have often seen and recognised as such in the course of a considerable residence in the Ness district.

“The fish are shoals of the salmon species ... they cavort and frivol on the surface in sea-serpent-like, undulating lines. ...

“Further, it would appear that ‘it’ has not been observed at less than half-a-mile range. The undulations of a school of fish in line ahead would be illusory at this distance or more. ...

“The fish solution is further borne out by the fact that the ‘monster’ manifests itself on calm, clear days, which is precisely the time when the salmon species leap and plunge for insect nutriment. Ruffled water would destroy the appearance of the phenomenon.”

A simple explanation—the product, apparently, of a simple mind. It may be thought to cover the commotion frequently seen in X’s vicinity—but assuredly it covers no single other item of the evidence.

### OTTERS

The suggestion that X might prove to be a family of otters, swimming in line, was put forward by Mr. R. Elmhirst, Director of the Scottish Marine Biological Association, Millport, in the *Daily Mail* (27.x.33). He illustrated his views with a sketch (upon which fig. 31 is based), depicting a “sea-serpent” which he saw in the Clyde three years pre-

<sup>125</sup> 1933 was a bad year for the Loch Ness salmon fisheries—but it was equally bad for most of those in Scotland, and I understand that the Ness Fishery Board do not attribute the diminished yield to the “monster’s” activities.

<sup>126</sup> Signed “Clachnaharry.”



vously, and which exhibited a reptilian head, undulating body and lashing tail. His account continues:

“I watched this ‘creature’ for an hour through field glasses. The reptilian head was a dog otter, the first hump on the surface the mother, and the second hump and the lashing tail were baby otters.

“The dog otter, swimming with its head erect, had seen me and given a warning. The mother and babies dived, and I was just in time to see the dog otter’s head and the backs of the others. They stretched over 18 feet of water.”

It will be recalled that Mr. Gillies, of Glendoe, subsequently sighted<sup>127</sup> an object which the *Daily Mail* asserted was X; but which, by his own account, was probably “three or four otters together, going in a bunch”; and this, in itself, tends to support Mr. Elmhirst’s

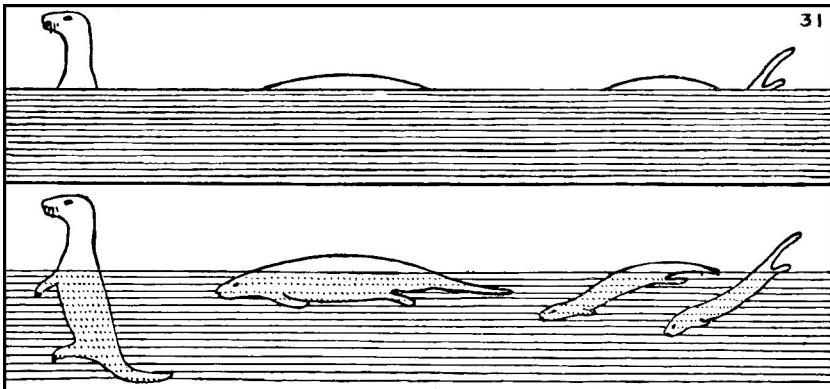


Fig. 31.—LINE OF OTTERS SEEN BY MR. ELMHIRST.

theory. But even if we load the dice heavily in its favour, and assume that eight or nine dog otters of the largest size, and possessed of an unflinching determination to swim in a rigid and unvarying line-ahead formation on all occasions, are accustomed to manoeuvre at high speed in the Loch, it does not seem at all likely that their leader could stand 5 feet out of water (as witnessed by Mr. Russell—25); or that—even if, as Dr. Johnson said of the hibernating swallows, they all “conglobulated”—they could form the single large hump seen by many witnesses, or the body observed by Comdr. Meiklem (10*b*—with binoculars) to be as big as that of a large cart-horse.

<sup>127</sup> See p. 62.

A letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (14.xii.33) suggested that X was a South American otter, which “grow up to twelve feet in length. ... Probably some British traveller has let one loose in Loch Ness.”

This seems very likely indeed; but as such a creature would have many points in common with a seal I will defer comment on this fascinating suggestion.

## PORPOISES

Here we have, of course, the stock solution of all “sea-serpent” reports—the sceptic’s *cheval de bataille*—trotted out once more. The objection already taken to the “otters in line” theory—that the leader could not possibly exhibit the elevated head and neck seen by many witnesses—applies with equal force to the suggestion that X is a school of porpoises; and there is another, and weightier, objection peculiar to the latter theory. If there is one feature of a porpoise more noticeable than another, as he rolls along, it is his dorsal fin; and all who have reported sighting X agree, however much their accounts may differ in other respects, that it exhibits no vestige of a dorsal fin—or, by most accounts, of any other.

So much, then, for the theories which presuppose the presence of a number of comparatively small creatures in single file. I turn to those which contend that X is a single large creature of known species.

In themselves, such theories are, of course, far more plausible than any of those already discussed. If we once grant that such a creature has found its way into the Loch, we should naturally expect to find reports of its presence—possibly magnified and distorted in points of detail—coming to hand not long afterwards. And a close examination of the best available evidence ought, one would imagine, to reveal the creature’s identity so clearly as to secure a large measure of general agreement on the point—without going to such extreme lengths as its capture and/or dissection.

Unfortunately, this is scarcely the case at present. Those persons—qualified or otherwise—who have put forward such theories disagree widely, among themselves, as to X’s actual identity. And in many cases the question of how the creature they have selected could have made its way into the Loch does not seem to have crossed their minds. However, I propose to deal with this objection as I did with the question of the sightings on land; to waive it, for the purpose of

discussion, in favour of those who have not stopped to consider it. I will accept the suggestion—seriously advanced on more than one occasion—that X, if precluded by any physical disability from ascending the Ness, has been thrown overboard, alive but immature, from some fishing-vessel passing through Loch Ness on her way along the Canal. With the same end in view, I am even prepared to admit that it may have escaped from some local menagerie or circus; or have been introduced into the Loch by some practical joker.<sup>128</sup> In short, I will confine myself exclusively to investigating the question of how far any member of a most heterogeneous collection of creatures—drawn from all parts of the world, and strangely diverse both in appearance and in organisation—can be regarded as conforming with what, at present, is known of the “Loch Ness monster.”

I have drawn up a short list of the candidates, arranging it in what I regard as a scale of decreasing improbability. I do not claim that it is exhaustive—but it includes all the theories that have come to my notice.

Plesiosaurus, or other Jurassic creature.

Tortoise.

\* Sunfish.

\* Ray.

Catfish.

Salamander.

Turtle.

\* Shark.

Eel.

Ribbon-fish.

Beluga, or any other species of small whale.

Sturgeon.

\* Squid.

<sup>128</sup> I only draw the line at being asked to suppose that X is of human construction—no doubt electrically propelled, and steered either from within or by W/T. On this supposition, I should consider that the designer had shamefully neglected his opportunities; just as Johnson, the famous Drury Lane property-man, looking scornfully at the equally-famous elephant Chunee walking through his part in a Covent Garden pantomime, was heard to remark, “Well, I should be very sorry if I couldn’t make a better elephant than that!”

Crocodile.

Seal—also walrus, sea-lion, sea-leopard or sea-elephant.

(\* In the case of creatures whose names are distinguished—both here and in the following pages—with an asterisk, there is another preliminary objection which, for the sake of discussion, I have also side-stepped; but which is quite fatal. I have Mr. E. C. Boulenger's<sup>129</sup> authority for stating that such creatures could not survive, for more than a few hours, in fresh water.)

## PLESIOSAURUS

Some accounts of X undeniably suggest that, in appearance, it greatly resembles the fossil plesiosaurus. That it may actually be one, "or some other prehistoric monster of a similar type," has been urged by (amongst others) Mr. A. Russell Smith.<sup>130</sup> In a letter to the *Morning Post* (14.x.33) he remarks:

"... I do not think your correspondent will quarrel with the suggestion that Loch Ness, a lake of almost fabulous depth,<sup>131</sup> at one time formed part of the ocean bed. Is it so inherently improbable, therefore, that some marine saurians lived through the Eocene period and have remained in the loch since it was separated from the sea—shall we say during the Pleistocene period?—breeding there, but undergoing generic modifications in course of time?"

In my judgment it is, inherently, very improbable indeed. In saying this, I am not overlooking the suggestion, in my former book (which Mr. Russell Smith mentions in the same letter), that the "sea-serpent," while not actually a plesiosaurus, "is either one of its descendants or has evolved along similar lines."<sup>132</sup> Some sea-creatures of the present day can trace their descent to Jurassic ancestors; and it is possible—no more than barely possible—that the open sea may still hold some descendant of the plesiosaurus; but to suppose that such could survive in Loch Ness alone (and, therefore, breed in fairly consider-

<sup>129</sup> Director of the Zoological Society's aquarium.

<sup>130</sup> A similar view was expressed by the Rt. Rev. D. O. Hunter-Blair, O.S.B., in the *Universe* (19.i.34).

<sup>131</sup> The maximum depth, actually, is some 750 feet. See p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> *The Case for the Sea-Serpent*, p. 277.

able numbers) for millions of years entails some rather startling consequences. What, on this assumption, has become of the bones which should, by now, have carpeted the entire floor of the Loch? Owen contended, long ago, that if the “sea-serpent” had any real existence some fragment of its skeleton must have been discovered somewhere on the Atlantic sea-board; but while this contention was generally unsound—for it is improbable that such creatures would float when dead—it would be applicable with great force to the special case of Loch Ness. Yet no trawl-net—and many have been put down for biological purposes—has ever brought up any fragment of the kind.

This objection, alone, appears fatal to the theory. It can only be evaded by supposing that the plesiosaurs were not permanently domiciled in the Loch, but came and went like salmon, via the Ness. In this case, it would be simpler to suppose that a single specimen had found its way up that river in recent years.

While dealing with this subject—the possible survival of some form of plesiosaurus, and its bearing upon the various reports of “sea-serpents”—I should like to take the opportunity of amplifying and qualifying what I said about it in my former book. Some readers of the *Times Literary Supplement* may remember that my remarks gave rise to a correspondence in its columns<sup>133</sup> between the late Dr. F. A. Bather and myself; and I should like to record the salient features of the controversy.

Dr. Bather pointed out that “the fossil remains of Plesiosauridæ are not uncommon throughout the Mesozoic or Secondary rocks,” but that “the fossil faunas of the Tertiary and Quaternary Eras, though rich enough in the bones of marine vertebrates, have not yielded a single fragment of a plesiosaurid”; and he concluded that “... until one has been found, the supposition that any representative of the family exists to-day is scarcely admissible.”

In reply, I pointed out that the “sea-serpent,” even if not a direct descendant of the plesiosaurus, might still have evolved along similar lines to it; and I cited, on the authority of Philip Gosse,<sup>134</sup> three instances (the iguana, the long-necked river-tortoise and the *Chimæra*)

<sup>133</sup> January 15–February 26, 1931. I deeply regret that, through sheer inadvertence, I consistently referred to a deservedly-celebrated geologist as “Mr. Bather.”

<sup>134</sup> *The Romance of Natural History* (first series, 1860), pp. 360, 361.

of living creatures whose ancestral types were to be found in the Secondary strata, but were absent from the Tertiary and Quaternary.

Being a casual reader attracted by Gosse's style, and not a serious student of geology, I had overlooked the fact that he wrote in 1860, and that palæontology is a progressive science. Dr. Bather courteously indicated that I was a little behind the times; and that Tertiary and Quaternary fossils of all three creatures had been found in many places.<sup>135</sup>

Reluctantly but firmly discarding my three cases of "living fossils," I searched for another and better-established example—of which I vaguely remembered reading. Eventually, I ran it to earth in Sedgwick's well-known *Text-Book of Zoology*<sup>136</sup>:

"... consider the natural imperfections of the geological record. *The fact that fossil remains of any particular animal are not found in any particular strata cannot be regarded as evidence of the non-existence of the animal.* If it could, we should have to regard the living genus *Sphenodon*<sup>137</sup> as being totally unconnected with the other genera of its family, for the family *Sphenodontidæ* is not found fossil after the Jurassic period."

I quoted this in my rejoinder, and pointed out that although written in 1905 it was, so far as I knew, unaffected by any recent discoveries. The letter continued:

"... to my mind, it alone is enough to ... give ground for my suggestion that the so-called 'sea-serpent' is either a descendant of the *Plesiosaurus* or a creature (of different ancestry) which has evolved along similar lines. If the *Sphenodon* be descended from the Jurassic *Sphenodontidæ*, we must admit that a contemporary of the *Plesiosaurus*, and a land creature at that, is still represented

<sup>135</sup> The *Times Literary Supplement* proposed to terminate the correspondence at this point; but ultimately deferred doing so until my second letter, and Dr. Bather's third, had appeared.

<sup>136</sup> Vol. II, p. 333. I have italicised one sentence.

<sup>137</sup> A lizard-like reptile, with a rudimentary third eye on the top of its head, found living in New Zealand. There was, until recently, a specimen in the Zoo. How it reached England is uncertain—"Tuatera," as the natives call it, is rare, and its export accordingly prohibited.

by living descendants, although no single link in the chain connecting them with their Jurassic ancestor has yet come to light. And if, on the other hand, we deny the *Sphenodon*'s descent from the *Sphenodontidæ*, we assert in effect that a recent creature may have evolved (from some unknown ancestor) along lines which have given it a very striking resemblance to a Jurassic creature with which, on this hypothesis, it has no direct connection; and this is exactly what, I suggest, may have happened in the case of the 'sea-serpent.'"

In reply, Dr. Bather pointed out that the geological record is more likely to be imperfect in the case of a land animal than of a marine one; and that remains of the *Sphenodontidæ* are at all times excessively rare, while those of the *Plesiosauridæ* are quite common. And he added:

"It is because we know the geological history of the *Plesiosauridæ* so well, and can trace their gradual extinction, that the supposition of a living *Plesiosaurus* sounds highly improbable to a palæontologist."

I am not a palæontologist—but I am, and always have been, disposed to agree with this view. Of my two alternatives, the second—the supposition that the striking resemblance in outline between the plesiosaurus and various "sea-serpents" reported, and sketched, in recent years is (at best) accidental—has always seemed to me the more probable. The first—that such creatures are actual plesiosaurs, or their direct descendants, is just possible—and that is all that can be said for it.

In any event, even if the "Loch Ness monster" should prove to be a plesiosaurus there is, as already pointed out, no evidence that it is indigenous, and much which goes to show that it cannot be.

A German writer, Herr Boelsche, is reported to have repressed the view that X may be a mosasaurus—another creature believed to be long extinct.<sup>138</sup> It does not fill the bill so well as the plesiosaurus; hav-

<sup>138</sup> The type-specimen was found at Maastricht in 1770, and provided many bones of contention. The cathedral chapter, as lords of the manor, appropriated the skeleton after a prolonged lawsuit—only to be in turn deprived of it, by force of arms, when French troops occupied Maastricht in 1794. It is now in Paris.

ing, in proportion, a much larger head and shorter neck. Here again, all that can be said is that its survival is just possible, and no more.

## TORTOISE

The *Daily Mail* (1.i.34) credits Dr. Barnett, curator of the Reptile House at the Zoo, with stating that to suppose X a giant tortoise “seems to be the best explanation of the monster yet put forward”—remarking, immediately afterwards, that such an animal would usually be hibernating in winter, and that the largest known was only about 4 feet long and 2½ feet broad. I cannot reconcile these statements with Dr. Barnett’s supposition.

## \* SUNFISH<sup>139</sup>

A letter from a Mr. A. Maclean to the *Scotsman* (16.xi.33), advocating this theory, is amusingly dogmatic:

“The Loch Ness monster is a sunfish,<sup>140</sup> a native of Australia. The sunfish captured after being severely wounded and killed in the East India Harbour, Greenock, tallies remarkably with this fish. ... It was about nine feet long, and had a fin about 18 inches long on the centre of its back, and another fin on its belly. ... It had a head like a turtle, with large protruding eyes. ...”

It would be interesting to see Mr. Maclean’s notion of a creature which differed, in one or two points of detail, from the Loch Ness reports. The sunfish—which is not exclusively a native of Australian waters, but may be met with in almost any lying between 60° N. and 50° S.—is chiefly remarkable for a total lack of any definite head and/or neck, and a pair of prominent rear fins, one dorsal and one ventral. It is also extremely sluggish in its movements; and while it is fond of basking on the surface, its most prominent feature when doing so would be the large dorsal. It could not possibly exhibit a line of humps, or even a single smooth hump; nor could the dorsal fin be mistaken, when the fish was in motion, for a slender projecting neck—since it

<sup>139</sup> See p. 101.

<sup>140</sup> Rather confusingly, the basking-shark is also known on the W. coast of Ireland—and possibly in other places—as the “sunfish.” Here, I imagine, that the writer refers to the genuine sunfish.



curves the wrong way. Finally, the largest known specimens have a maximum length of about 8 feet.

\* RAY<sup>141</sup>

An American reader of the *Daily Record*, Mr. Robert Fleming, announced in that paper (2.i.34) his surprising conviction that "... Loch Ness has in its grip, as an unwilling captive, a Great Manta. ..."

The Great Manta, or giant ray, is a tropical fish, its principal habitat being the coast of Florida. Specimens have been captured weighing five tons, and measuring 21 feet between the tips of the enormous pectoral fins. In spite of its size, it is reported to be in the habit of jumping clear of the water and descending with a vast splash. This accords with the early portion of Mr. Milne's account (3), but not quite so well with his description of X as being "length without breadth"—the giant ray, in spite of a whip-like tail, is about as broad as it is long. Nor, although it possesses a pair of horn-like projections, one on either side of its gaping mouth, has it any member which could conceivably be mistaken for a long, slender neck. In fact, it may pair off with the sun-fish as differing markedly from X in practically every reported particular.

Mr. Fleming based his theory on Mr. Gray's photograph,<sup>142</sup> and his somewhat curious description (if correctly reported) of X as having "a long tail, but no head." He remarks, with a touch of obscurantism:

"The technical reasons leading to such conviction are too intricate to explain in detail—they concern the ripples on the water, the shadows and so on—but they are all perfectly consonant with the way in which a Great Manta would proceed through the water. ..."

Actually the vagueness of the photograph compels one to realise that all such details are simply the product of imagination.

## CATFISH

Another example of a theory entirely divorced from the evidence is provided by Dr. A. van Veldhuizen, Professor of Theology at Gronin-

<sup>141</sup> See p. 101.

<sup>142</sup> See Plate I.

gen,<sup>143</sup> who considers that X is a catfish of the species found in the Danube and its estuary. "This fish ... is from 10 to 14 feet long and, owing to its repulsive appearance, is often regarded by seamen with superstitious dread."<sup>144</sup>

### SALAMANDER

The suggestion that X might be some species of giant salamander "indigenous to Loch Ness and its rivers" was made by Lt.-Col. W. H. Lane, Glenmoriston, in a letter to the *Inverness Courier* (10.x.33).<sup>145</sup> While pointing out that the largest living variety is a native of Japan (although specimens had also been obtained in China), he stated that he had shot what he believed to be a creature of the kind in the Chin Hills district of Burma.

There are, unfortunately, many objections to this theory. In the first place, the existing giant salamanders do not, so far as is known, exceed 6 feet in length; nor has any fossil specimen been found of more than twice this length. It is difficult to understand why an amphibian, capable of spreading over the whole of the British Isles, should confine itself exclusively to the Loch Ness region; and the entire absence of remains tells very strongly against the supposition that it is indigenous.

### TURTLE

While close study of Mr. Gray's photograph led Mr. Fleming, as we have seen, to the conviction that X is a Great Manta, it has guided Major Meikle, Governor of the Borstal Institution at Polmont, to quite a different conclusion<sup>146</sup>:

"I strongly believe that it is the Leathery or Green turtle. The former species can grow to a gigantic size, and often weighs over a ton."

He based this conclusion upon a shadow in the photograph which bore an "unmistakable" resemblance to the head of a turtle.

<sup>143</sup> So far, I have not ascertained what theory has been emitted by the even better-known Dr. Strabismus (Whom God Preserve) of Utrecht.

<sup>144</sup> *Daily Mail*, 5.i.34.

<sup>145</sup> See also an article by Mr. L. R. Brightwell in the *Daily Mail*, 27.xii.33.

<sup>146</sup> *Daily Record and Mail* (interview), 8.xii.33.

“The white expanse could be accounted for if this were the case, because it would be the shell of the creature.”

Unfortunately, Mr. Gray’s photograph is not the whole, or even an important part, of the evidence—a fact of which, personally, I am rather glad. How a turtle, of any size, could present the appearance of a number of equal-sized humps in line, or exhibit a long tail moving from side to side, Major Meikle does not explain. Incidentally, while the change from salt water to fresh would not, in the case of a turtle, prove immediately fatal, the poor creature would probably not survive it more than a few weeks.

At the same time, I know of at least one practical zoologist who looks to some undiscovered species of giant long-necked turtle for the explanation of at least one or two “sea-serpent” cases—those, for example, of the *Moha Moha* (1890), and the *Valhalla* (1905).<sup>147</sup>

\* SHARK<sup>148</sup>

As related in a subsequent chapter, the basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) undoubtedly possesses the ability, when dead and partly decomposed, to pass himself off, upon all but trained marine biologists, as a “sea-serpent” or other “monster.” But when alive, and swimming freely, his talents in this direction are severely circumscribed by his complete lack of a neck, and his possession of a large dorsal fin. Consequently, while the suggestion has more than once been mooted<sup>149</sup> that X is a basking shark (I, for one, should have been immensely surprised if this stock theory, and its rival, the “school of porpoises,” had not been pressed once more into service), it does not require more than passing mention.

EEL

The theory that X is an enormous eel is considerably more plausible, although it postulates the existence of one at least three times as long as the biggest known conger. It will be recalled that the late Mr. R. Matheson is credited with observing a gigantic eel in the Loch many

<sup>147</sup> *The Case for the Sea-Serpent*, pp. 173, 195.

<sup>148</sup> See p. 101.

<sup>149</sup> *Inverness Courier*, 24.x.33; *Scotsman*, 20.x.33 and 6.xi.33.

years ago<sup>150</sup> and that what Mr. Milne (3) saw of X—apart from its peculiar motion—strongly suggested to him the idea that it might be an enormous conger. Mr. Cameron's account, too (15), is consistent with the supposition that he saw a very large eel.

The theory seems to be popular among the casual correspondents of various newspapers<sup>151</sup> but none of them, so far as I can discover, has ventured to give his eel a greater length than 10 feet—which, of course, is quite insufficient. An eel's body is roughly cylindrical along most of its length—and for it to exhibit a portion of this as a single hump whose dimensions approximate to those of an upturned boat (X's most frequently reported aspect) the diameter of the body would have to be some 4 feet or thereabouts. Comdr. Meiklem's observations, too (10*b*), could scarcely be explained by a body of less diameter than this. In proportion, the total length of the eel would then be some 80 feet. And while it is unquestionable that an eel of this unheard-of length might be able to raise its head some 5 feet or so above water, as observed by Mr. Russell (25), its appearance in that attitude could not be reconciled with what he saw and sketched—an arched, slender neck with a maximum diameter of about a foot. Furthermore, even an 80-foot eel would be unable—having no paddles—to remain apparently motionless while surrounded by an area of disturbed water: an appearance seen by several witnesses.

Although we must, I think, abandon the supposition that an eel as long as a tennis-court inhabits Loch Ness, it is possible that one of this size may, some day, be met with at sea—it is even possible that such may have already been seen, though not identified. Witness the following, from the *Times*, 17.i.34:

“Among many strange exhibits to be found at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Copenhagen, there is an eel larva which may possibly help towards a solution of the Loch Ness mystery. It was brought to Denmark by the Marine Investigation Expedition which, under the leadership of Professor Johannes Schmidt, sailed round the world in 1930 in the *Dana*.

<sup>150</sup> See p. 24.

<sup>151</sup> E.g. *Inverness Courier*, 15.ix.33, 3.x.33, 24.x.33; *Scotsman*, 17.x.33, 23.x.33, 24.x.33, 4.xi.33; *Times*, 5.i.34. See also an article in the *Glasgow Herald*, 6.xii.33, by Mr. Norman Morrison, D.Sc., F.Z.S.

“This eel larva, now preserved in spirits of wine, is 184 cm. (just over 6 feet) long. It was fished up off the Cape of Good Hope, and from such deep water that it was dead on arrival at the surface.

“The relevance of this eel larva to the Loch Ness monster is that if its growth had continued in like proportion to that of other eel larva it would eventually reach a total length of from 80 to 100 feet. An ordinary eel larva measures only 2 inches to 4 inches.

“Like other members of the eel family, this giant larva possesses a narrow dorsal fin along the back, two breast fins, and the usual anal fins. No eel larva approaching it in size has been found anywhere in the world before, and there is no means of knowing what it looked like when full-grown.”

It should be noted, however, that this larva may have been a “sport” which would never have reached normal maturity.

#### RIBBON-FISH

A very ordinary specimen<sup>152</sup> of the ribbon-fish, or “King of the Herring,” was washed ashore in the Moray Firth (18.v.34); and the suggestion was immediately made that this must be X, at last escaped from Loch Ness.<sup>153</sup> However, the latter was seen in the Loch four days later.<sup>154</sup>

The objections, already detailed, to the eel theory apply with equal force to this. Moreover, the ribbon-fish is even narrower, in proportion to its length, than an eel; and it could scarcely look dark in any conditions of lighting, since its skin shines like polished silver.

#### BELUGA

An undoubted authority—Mr. Percy H. Grimshaw, Keeper of the Natural History Department of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh—has given it as his considered opinion that X is a young beluga, or “white whale.” The following extract is from a letter to the *Scotsman* (28 x.33) in which he enunciated this opinion.

<sup>152</sup> Only 13 feet long. There is a 20-foot specimen in the Royal Scottish Museum.

<sup>153</sup> *Daily Mail*, 21.v.34.

<sup>154</sup> *Daily Mail*, 23.v.34.

“So various are the theories put forth—many of them extremely wild—that it appears time for someone to make a tentative identification in accordance with the observations. In our opinion the creature will probably turn out to be a young beluga or white whale. This animal, whose home is in Arctic seas, is said to ascend regularly large rivers, such as the St. Lawrence and the Amur. According to Bell (*History of British Quadrupeds*) it reaches a length of 12 to 16 feet or even more. When young this whale is of a bluish-grey colour, but later on becomes first yellow and then white. There is no fin on the back, thus differing from most British whales, and this may have misled observers. The brown colour, the peculiar swaying motion, and the stirring of the water behind the animal, so well described in your issue of to-day,<sup>155</sup> are all in keeping with our identification.

“The white whale has only been known to occur on eight occasions in Scottish waters, but it is interesting in this connection to note that a young male 8½ feet in length (which was still of a uniform mouse-grey colour) was taken in the River Forth above Stirling on October 13, 1932—just a year ago.”

I should hesitate to follow Mr. Grimshaw in calling his “tentative identification” “extremely wild,” but at the same time I should hesitate a good deal longer before admitting that it was “in accordance with the observations,” or even with the majority of them. In fact, the only points of agreement between the evidence and the theory are the colour, and the absence of a dorsal fin. And the discrepancies are many. If the identification be admitted, we must discard, in the first place, all the evidence as to X’s size, and reduce it to a maximum visible length of some 4 or 5 feet. For we must assume that our beluga is immature, since if full-grown its colour would be a uniform, glistening, creamy white. Its total length, therefore, could scarcely exceed 10 feet; and, unless stranded, it would not exhibit more than half this length above water.

Secondly, we must jettison any evidence which credits X with a long, slender neck and a small head; for the beluga is destitute of both

<sup>155</sup> An account of Mr. McQueen’s second sighting. See 27c.

these features.<sup>156</sup> It is, of course, open to us to do so, if we consider that all the witnesses were incapable of exact observation on these points—but in this case it would, surely, be a saving of time and trouble to discard the rest of the evidence as well.

In any event, we must also discard the evidence of Comdr. Meiklem (10*b*). A creature some 10 feet long, with a maximum diameter of perhaps 2 feet or rather less, is scarcely likely to remain motionless in some 4–6 feet of water, while at the same time rising out of it sufficiently to exhibit a body resembling, in size, that of a large cart-horse.

And, finally, we must put aside any reports which speak of observing a series of humps, divided by water spaces, and rising to a more or less equal height above the surface. So far as is known, no whale of any species is capable of contorting itself in this fashion.

So much, then, for the statement that the beluga theory is “in accordance with the observations.” That, as matters stand, it conflicts with the weight of evidence—and is therefore at best quasi-scientific—I think few will deny.

It has, none the less, been whole-heartedly accepted by Mr. W. P. Pycraft, F.Z.S., in an *Illustrated London News* article.<sup>157</sup> I was amused to read, in this:

“The fact that the old story of the sea-serpent ... has turned up again is interesting. It is high time that it was decently buried. ...”

This compares rather curiously with a passage in an earlier *I.L.N.* article by the same authority, accompanying a drawing of the *Valhalla*'s sea-monster (30.vi.1906):

“Seriously, we can no longer regard the ‘sea-serpent’ as a myth. There can be no question but that the ocean harbours some secret which we have not yet penetrated. ...”

In passing, it may be mentioned that there are several other small whales which, by the same method of rejecting all evidence which conflicts with the theory, can be identified with X. There is, for example, the narwhal—which, like the beluga, has no dorsal fin. By supposing X

<sup>156</sup> The stuffed beluga in the Royal Scottish Museum is somewhat misleading in these respects. I should judge that it is not exactly a typical specimen of modern taxidermy.

<sup>157</sup> 11.xi.33.

to be a female narwhal, we suppress the otherwise-inconvenient long spiral tusk projecting from the head; or we may consider that this tusk—about 5 feet long, 2 inches in maximum diameter, and as straight as a ramrod—is, actually, the slender curved neck and small head of the reports. The colour—various shades of grey—is sufficiently “in accordance with the observations,” and the admissible length is slightly greater. The other discrepancies, unfortunately, remain as formidable as ever—but, if I were compelled to choose between beluga and narwhal, I should unhesitatingly select the latter.

There are also various beaked whales (*Berardius*, *Mesoplodon* and *Ziphius*), the killer whale (*Orca gladiator*), and the bottle-nosed whale (*Hyperoodon*). All of these, by the same method of hand-picking the evidence, can be “tentatively identified” with X. True, they labour under the additional handicap of possessing a dorsal fin; but, on the other hand, they are darker in colour. And, looking still further afield, we find the hump-back whale raising a flipper to attract our attention. That is literally the case: the humpback has disproportionately large flippers—those of a 30-foot specimen would be about 7 feet long—and it is often seen lying on its side, the body just submerged, with one long, nearly-white flipper standing almost vertically out of the water. Here—it may be urged—is a creature, of much the required size, which is peculiarly fitted for exhibiting the “one-hump” aspect, and can at times appear to raise a long slender neck.

That is, however, all that can be said in its favour. On the other hand, it possesses a dorsal fin (admittedly, not very conspicuous); it could not possibly exhibit a line of humps; it is very broad in proportion to its length; it has a habit of leaping right out of water; and, like all whales, it is an air-breather and must come to the surface at frequent intervals—so that if once seen it could be followed, either with the naked eye or a telescope, for a long way up and down the Loch, while its blowing would be audible, by day or night, for a considerable distance. The last objection, of course, applies with equal force to the identification of X with *any* species of whale.

Such considerations, however, have not deterred Mr. A. Fraser-Brunner, curator of the British Sea Anglers’ Society, from maintain-



ing<sup>158</sup> that Mr. Wilson's photograph<sup>159</sup> shows "the high dorsal fin of an old male killer whale." He remarks:

"In this species the fin on the back gets longer and longer with age until, in old examples, it is so tall and slender that it bends over at the top under its own weight."

This is perfectly true—but it entails a consequence which, I fear, Mr. Brunner-Fraser has overlooked. Let us assume that, as he rather confidently asserts, X is an old male killer. If it were ever seen by anyone, at any time, its most prominent feature—the one portion of it which could not possibly escape notice—would be its enormous dorsal fin. I pass over the impossibility of a killer—or, for that matter, any whale—showing on the surface as a line of humps: but how could any witness observe it in the "single-hump aspect"—the most common of all X's protean forms—without noticing that this hump was crowned by a long, pointed dorsal fin several feet high? Yet no witness has remarked anything of the kind; all, without exception, state that the hump was smooth in outline, exhibiting no trace of any fins.

In the face of this violent conflict between theory and fact, it is scarcely worth while to labour the point that, according to Mr. Wilson, the creature which he photographed was moving from left to right; and that the curvature of the "fin" would postulate that its possessor was moving from right to left.

## STURGEON

An article in the *Inverness Courier* (3.xi.33), discussing the suggestion that X might be an unusually large conger-eel, remarks:

"But if the monster be a conger eel, he is more likely to subsist in fresh water than any other inhabitant of the deep, salmon and sturgeon excepted. Indeed, the theory of the monster being a sturgeon is as likely as that it is an eel, seeing it has been known occasionally to ascend British rivers, and in size and shape the monster would seem to approximate to the reality of an unusually large sturgeon (the giant sturgeon of the Black and Caspian Seas attains

<sup>158</sup> *Daily Mail*, 23.iv.34.

<sup>159</sup> See Frontispiece.

a length of twenty-four feet, and sometimes more). The majority of those who have seen the monster give its size as about thirty feet.”

It is undoubtedly true that sturgeon sometimes find their way into our rivers,<sup>160</sup> and ascend them for a very considerable distance. In 1883 a fine specimen was captured at St. Ives, in Huntingdonshire.<sup>161</sup> To get there, it must have come up the Ouse from King’s Lynn—a distance of some 50 miles—passing several locks en route. And in some ways the sturgeon theory is rather attractive. The sturgeon is a ganoid

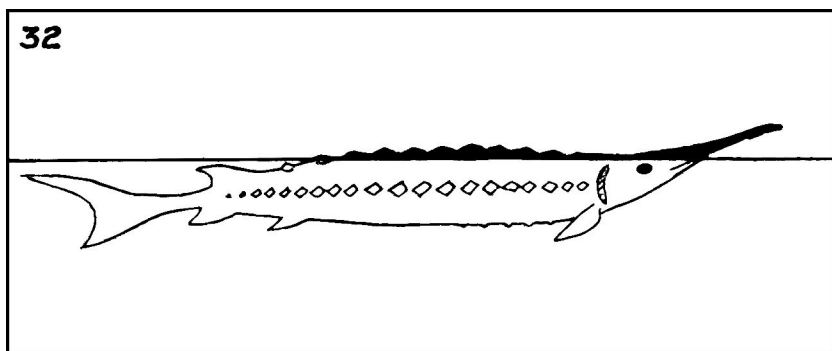


Fig. 32.—THE “GIANT STURGEON” THEORY.

fish, and has a series of bony plates on the crest of its back (there are other series on either side), which give this a serrated appearance. Furthermore, its jaws are prolonged into a long, flat, tapering snout, sometimes slightly curved. There is a dorsal fin, but this is close to the tail.

It may, therefore, be held that the head and neck attributed to X by various observers are, actually, the snout of a huge sturgeon, raised temporarily above the surface—that the line of humps sometimes seen is formed by its serrated back—and that the fin-like appearance in rear, infrequently reported, is either the upper lobe of the tail or the dorsal fin closely preceding this.

I touched upon this theory, as applying to certain “sea-serpent” reports, in my former book, and illustrated it with a sketch repeated

<sup>160</sup> By proscription, they are “royal” fish; and, if taken in British waters, belong to the Crown.

<sup>161</sup> See H. W. Leathes’ *Rough Notes on Natural History* (Jarrold, London, n.d.).

here (fig. 32). I did not, then, expect it to be taken very seriously; but in the present case it certainly seems to be worth examining.

The chief objection is that it postulates a sturgeon of quite enormous size; one say, 60 feet long—or nearly three times as large as the biggest yet known. And, secondly, if the humps were ganoid plates they could not possibly vary as to size, number and interval—nor could the appearance of a single, large, smooth hump (suggesting that the plates had all been planed off) conceivably be presented at any time.

\* SQUID<sup>162</sup>

Dr. William Beebe, the American naturalist—well-known for his deep-water descents in a steel observation-sphere—recently informed the New York Zoological Society<sup>163</sup> that he believed X to be a giant squid.

I have not, unfortunately, come across even a summary of his arguments, but it is interesting to note that the theory has been endorsed by Mr. W. U. Goodbody, Invergarry—who, with his two daughters, watched X for forty minutes on December 30, 1933 (36). I subjoin Mr. Goodbody's views, as they appeared in the *Daily Record and Mail* (27.i.34):

“The squid theory fits in with the descriptions given by most of the eye-witnesses, including myself. It would, in the first place, account for the size of the creature, for giant squids or cuttlefish have been known to reach a length of 50 feet.

“It would also account for the humps sticking out of the water as seen by myself and others.

“The monster has been known to move comparatively slowly along the water, as I saw it, and to travel at a great speed, setting up a big wave.

“The giant squid, it is significant, has two modes of travel. Normally it moves slowly, but, when alarmed, it travels much more quickly by means of drawing in water and expelling it. That might

<sup>162</sup> See p. 101.

<sup>163</sup> He is the Director of its Tropical Research Department

account for the high speed it has been known to develop at times, and for the waves set up as it moved.”

I shall have something to say, in the following chapter, of how we came by even our present very limited knowledge of the giant squid, and of how its existence was, for many years, entirely discredited by scientific men. It is enough, here, to say that about a dozen specimens were stranded on the Newfoundland coast between 1870 and 1877—and that while much remains to be discovered in connection with them (for example, their habitat and diet are still unknown) their configuration and proportions are fairly well ascertained. The largest known invertebrate animals, they are, in all but minor details, much enlarged copies of the common squid, or *loligo*; having a body like a fat cigar (with two flukes near the point), a head of much the same diameter provided with two enormous eyes, and ten sucker-studded arms, eight of which may be considerably longer than the body, while the other pair are about three times its length.<sup>164</sup> The dimensions of one of the Newfoundland specimens were computed to be: body, 10 feet long, 2½ feet diameter; head, 2 feet diameter; long arms, about 32 feet; total length, about 44 feet.

I have already mentioned that, so far as is known, a giant squid could not live in fresh water—at least, a common squid could not, and there is no evidence of any specific difference, in the larger varieties, which would allow them to adjust themselves to the new environment. Still, this is only an inference—though a fair and probable one; and, for the present, I will waive it.

The theory is, I consider, inapplicable to X on several other grounds. How, in the first place, are the reported small head, and long slender neck, to be explained?

Whole-hearted advocates of the giant squid would probably do so in one of two ways. They might contend that the head and neck were the squid's body, forced out of water by the power of its impulse-tube; and in this case they might point with pride to the caudal flukes as explaining the appendages described by Miss Fraser (23*a*). Or, on the

<sup>164</sup> There is an admirable full-size model of a giant squid in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington.

other hand, they might regard the head and neck as being, actually, the end of one of the tentacles.

The former contention is clearly untenable. It is certainly possible that a giant squid could raise, say, half its body above water for a second or two—small squid have been known to jump on to a vessel's deck—but it could scarcely keep it above water for ten solid minutes, as timed by Mr. Russell (25). Nor could the "neck" have the pronounced curvature which he noted.

And on the second hypothesis we must assume that the tentacles are rather more than a foot in diameter. Incidentally we are led, independently, to the same conclusion if we regard the tentacles as forming the line of humps, rising a foot or so above water, which Mr. Goodbody (36) saw. Their diameter must have been greater than their height, or else they would have looked like hoops, not humps.

In proportion, the body of a giant squid whose tentacles were a foot in diameter would be some 60 feet long, and the two long arms about 150 feet. I, for one, am not prepared to go to such lengths to accept any theory—especially one which is, *prima facie*, most improbable.

Furthermore, while a creature of such vast size, moving rapidly just below the surface, might certainly produce a very marked wave, the most notable feature of this would not be its size, but its intermittent character—for the squid, when propelling itself by its impulse-tube, moves in a series of jerks or leaps. No motion of this kind has been observed by any witness. Bearing the "squid" theory in mind, I addressed a special enquiry on the point to Mr. R. Fullerton (14), since he had described X as moving across the Loch in zig-zags. He replied, quite definitely, that while the direction of its course altered periodically, its speed remained constant.

## CROCODILE

That X may be a crocodile is a suggestion which, at first sight, does not seem to be worth taking seriously. But, actually, there is a good deal more to be said for this theory than for several of those already discussed.

The initial difficulty of understanding how any species of crocodile could find its way to Loch Ness is removed if we accept a statement by Mrs. J. S. Fraser, "widow of a well-known Inverness solicitor," which appeared in the *Daily Mail* (1.i.34). Here is her story:

“About 1888, when I first came to visit my husband’s family, ... we were warned to be very careful of ‘the crocodile’ if we went on the rocks on Loch Ness shore near Dores. ...

“My father-in-law told me that a man he knew very well went out to South Africa as a young man and returned in middle life. He took a small croft between Dores and Foyers, and, because he had formed a liking for them, wrote to a friend in South Africa to send him three young crocodiles.

“They arrived, and were kept in a specially-built tank on the croft. As they grew bigger their owner became afraid of them and decided to send them to a zoo. While he was in correspondence with the zoo, one of the crocodiles disappeared and was never found. It was believed that it had made its way into Loch Ness.”

Where, in all likelihood, it died of cold during the following winter—for the crocodile’s normal habitat is in tropical, or at least sub-tropical, regions. Still, it may conceivably have survived,<sup>165</sup> acclimatised itself, and grown—such creatures grow, slowly but continuously, during almost their entire lifetime.

A large crocodile, floating flush with the surface, looks very like a floating log; a slight change of attitude would cause it to show as a single large hump; and a slight elevation of the head and tail when in this position would give the appearance of three (or possibly more) smaller humps. A strong swimmer, it could move at considerable speed, exhibiting a paddling action at the sides, and the wash of a powerful tail. There would be no inherent improbability in its being seen on the Loch-shore, or crossing the road; and even the appearance witnessed by Mr. Palmer (12) might be interpreted as a view of its snout, the rest of the body being submerged. Similarly one might hold that the “slender neck” was, actually, a side view of the snout when considerably elevated.

The last suggestion is rendered considerably more acceptable by supposing that X is a particular species of crocodile—the Gangetic gaval, or gharial, which has a very long and very slender snout, with

<sup>165</sup> Mr. C. W. Ingram informs me that a skull, believed to be that of a crocodile, was brought up in a fishing-net at the mouth of the River Sheil, in Loch Moidart. It was not a fossil, and did not seem to have been immersed very long. Probably, it was some relic or trophy which had been jettisoned.

a swelling at its extremity. Furthermore, the gavial is a fish-eater, and thus would not be tempted to raid the herds and flocks in its neighbourhood—depredations which could scarcely have passed unnoticed during so many years. Unfortunately, the gavial is not found in South Africa.<sup>166</sup>

I have, I think, said enough to show that the crocodile theory is, at least, not hopelessly incompatible with the evidence. But some discrepancies remain. A crocodile, unless suffering from acute kyphosis, could not exhibit either the two large humps seen by Mrs. Mackay (5) or the line of regular and well-marked humps observed by Mr. Goodbody (36). Its general outline, when floating, is quite incompatible with the sketches of Mrs. Fraser (23*a*) and Mr. Carson (38). And the curved, slender object which Mr. Russell (25) sketched, and Mr. Wilson photographed, could not have been a crocodile's snout—or, for that matter, any other portion of such a creature.

## SEAL

Finally, I come to the most plausible theory of all—one which, at present, holds the field. That is, that the “Loch Ness monster” belongs to the *Pinnepedia*—and is, in all likelihood, a large grey seal.

The leading exponent of this view is Mr. M. A. C. Hinton, Deputy-keeper of Zoology at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington. Other authorities, such as Dr. C. H. Townsend,<sup>167</sup> Mr. R. Elmhirst<sup>168</sup> and Mr. T. H. Gillespie,<sup>169</sup> have also expressed the same conclusion. Furthermore, since the return of the *Daily Mail* “mission,” that paper has (until recently) lost no reasonable opportunity of advocating the seal theory—while a short note in *Nature* (13.i.34) regards the “mystery” as finally explained on this basis.

It is undoubtedly true that there are many points in favour of the supposition that X is some species of seal: presumably, a grey seal—since that is the largest type known to occur on the Scottish coast. Although such seals have never been seen, hitherto, in Loch Ness, there

<sup>166</sup> The third member of the family—the alligator—is out of court for an additional reason. It has a distinctive raucous bark, which should often have been heard—by night especially.

<sup>167</sup> Director of the New York Aquarium.

<sup>168</sup> Superintendent of the Marine Biological Station, Millport.

<sup>169</sup> Secretary of the Scottish Zoological Society.

is no question that one could find its way thither (overland, if necessary)<sup>170</sup>—and so unusual an event might easily postpone its identification. A grey seal has a long and surprisingly extensible neck; it swims with a paddling action; its colour fills the bill; and there is nothing surprising in its being seen on the shore of the Loch, or crossing a road.

But, granting all this, there remains a most formidable body of discrepancies and objections. In the first place, if X is a seal, we must discard almost all the available evidence as to its size, shape and general appearance. The estimated length—even if we bring this down as low as 24 feet—is still double that of any ordinary species of seal; the reported proportions of head and neck are scarcely seal-like; the long tail must be discarded, for a seal has no tail at all; and the line of humps so often observed must also be dismissed as illusory.

Such is, indeed, Mr. Hinton's own contention, in a *Field* article (27.i.34) which presumably expresses his considered views. He emphasises, in the first place, the difficulty of obtaining accurate evidence:

“Accurate observation, even of familiar stationary things on land, is a very difficult art; and accurate description of the impression left by the observation is still more difficult. These difficulties are enormously enhanced when the observation concerns an unfamiliar object seen at some considerable distance in motion in the water, where light, reflections, ripple, wind and haze change from second to second.

“Considerations such as these would lead us to expect many discrepancies of detail in the stories of the witnesses; so that no adverse criticism could be based upon the variable nature of their accounts. The more honest and uninstructed the witnesses the more they will differ from each other and the more difficult it will be for the zoologist to find out what it is they are all endeavouring to describe. ...”

<sup>170</sup> Seal have been encountered in the most unlikely places—some years ago, one was found half-way up a Scottish mountain, and miles from the sea. Grey seals have made 30-mile journeys over rough country.



[In the main, these contentions are just—if a trifle exaggerated; but I shall show, later, that X, if a seal, would not—to many of the witnesses—have been an “unfamiliar object.”]

“Much stress has been laid upon the supposed colossal length of the ‘monster,’ its small head, long outstretched neck, and serpentine body indicated by humps visible above the water. Each description of the swimming animal is a simple summary of the impressions made on the mind of each observer by a longer or shorter series of continually changing images. In no one of them could we put implicit trust. The very agreement of the more sensational stories tells against them. The observers, despite their good faith, seem to have been influenced subconsciously by three things, singly or in combination, namely, the Kelpie tradition, the sea-serpent myth, and by the picture-postcards of the ‘monster’ on sale in Inverness.”

It is fairly obvious that Mr. Hinton considered that the evidence—that is to say, such evidence as was available to him when he wrote—was, as it stood, quite incompatible with his theory; and that, in consequence, some explanation of the discrepancy was required. I cannot say, however, that I find this explanation satisfactory or convincing.

He tells us that we may naturally expect “many discrepancies of detail” in the evidence, so that “no adverse criticism could be based” upon this. Later, he remarks that the “very agreement of the more sensational stories tells against them.” In other words, he is quite ready to accept conflicting testimonies, but inclines to reject any which are consistent. This is a rather curious method of conducting what professes—according to the sub-title of his article—to be “an analysis of the evidence.”

And if the method be questionable, the material to which it is applied is no less so. I should judge that it consisted, almost entirely, of unsifted newspaper reports; which, as already explained, are full of pitfalls. At any rate, I am confident that at least half the evidence given in this book was not available to Mr. Hinton; while if he had made any personal enquiries he would, I think, have modified his theory of the various occult influences to which he considers that the witnesses were exposed.

Anyone who will look through the estimates of X's size, and the accounts of its appearance, given in Chapter One will be able to form his own opinion of how fatally they conflict with the supposition that X is a seal. Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that the supposition is correct; that the witnesses (and, also, Mr. Wilson's camera) were "subconsciously influenced." Here are a few more difficulties.

Sightings of X have often been heralded or attended by a very violent commotion in the water; and it is most usually seen as a single large dark-coloured hump. A seal, when swimming, creates very little disturbance; and, when swimming, it is either totally submerged or has its head—but not its body—showing. It never swims with its back above water and its head below.

A seal has a powerful voice, and is not afraid to use it. No one has ever heard X emit a sound of any kind.<sup>171</sup>

The seal—an air-breather—usually breaks surface at short intervals in order to breathe. If once sighted, it could be followed with the naked eye for miles—since, even if swimming rapidly under water, it would probably come up every few hundred yards. X has often been seen to dive and disappear completely, in calm weather—no further trace of it appearing, as far as the eye could reach, however long the watch was continued.

Finally, I propose to call some of the witnesses—who, after all, are surely entitled to be heard upon the point—to give their opinion as to whether what they saw was a seal. In sending the transcripts of evidence to them for checking, I raised this point—and here are the replies.

MR. ALEX SHAW (6).—"I have stayed for a few years in Ireland, ... close to the sea, where I have seen a lot of seals. ... The creature I saw moving in Loch Ness was as big as a dozen seals."

MRS. MACLENNAN (11).—"We are too well aware of seals to think of comparing this to them."

MRS. B. MACDONELL (18).—"As to the creature being a large seal, I am very doubtful."

<sup>171</sup> Korv.-Kapt. Frhr. v. Forstner, in a *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* article (12.i.34), remarks, "Several communications state that, when on the surface, the animal emits shrill ear-splitting noises." I can only say that I have never heard of, or read, any report of the kind.

MRS. C. MACDONALD (20).—"It had not the appearance of a seal, which I have often seen."

MR. H. MACPHAIL (21).—"The creature was certainly not a seal."

MR. J. MCSKIMMING (22).—"I don't see how the creature can be a seal, for on the first occasion I saw a good thirty feet of it."

MR. B. A. RUSSELL, M.A.<sup>172</sup> (25).—"I have, of course, seen notices, in several journals, of the 'identification' of the creature as a large seal—*barbata* or otherwise. So far as I am aware, all the experts who have so identified it share one qualification. They have not seen the creature."

It will be noted, also, that in the course of the evidence four witnesses—Mr. Milne (3), Mr. Cameron (15), Mr. McConnell (26) and Mr. Goodbody (36)—all of whom were well acquainted with the appearance of seals in the water, have testified that what they saw was certainly not a seal.

In my judgment, the theory that X is a seal may safely be dismissed, in the face of these numerous and weighty objections, as definitely untenable.<sup>173</sup> With it go the associated theories that X is a walrus, a sea-leopard or a sea-elephant. I do not propose to discuss these in much detail. A party of five students from the Edinburgh College of Art,<sup>174</sup> who spent a week at Loch Ness investigating, reached the conclusion (*Scotsman*, 22.i.34) that X was probably a walrus. On the other hand, one of their number (Mr. J. A. Erskine-Murray) remarks, in a letter to that paper, published on the following day:

"The 'seal' theory agrees less than any other with the existing data as to the nature of the Loch Ness 'monster.'"

<sup>172</sup> It may be recalled that Mr. Russell, when he sighted X, was expecting that it would prove to be a large seal.

<sup>173</sup> An editorial in the *Field* (10.ii.34) came to the same conclusion—based, I should judge, upon adverse criticism of Mr. Hinton's article expressed by several of its correspondents.

<sup>174</sup> Messrs. A. F. Hay (F.Z.S.Scot.), J. A. Erskine-Murray, D. Peploe, A. Anderson and E. Morrison.

And I gather that the original conclusion was chiefly reached under the influence of another bogus “spoor”—this time, that of a rhinoceros<sup>175</sup>—planted (near Abriachan) for the party to find.

A letter to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (20.i.34) confidently identified X—on second-hand evidence—as “Judy,” a young walrus washed overboard from a Dundee whaler, some forty years ago, in the Moray Firth.

Actually, there is not much to choose, on the score of improbability, between the walrus, sea-leopard and sea-elephant theories. The sea-leopard has the advantage over the walrus on the ground of its much longer and thinner neck, and the sea-elephant on that of its far greater size—on the other hand, both of the latter are natives of the Antarctic, and have never been encountered elsewhere. All three are open to the same general objections as the seal theory—they neither cover the positive evidence available, nor explain away the negative.

And now for a little constructive criticism.

<sup>175</sup> So Mr. Hinton states, in his *Field* article.

## The Evidence Analysed

In this chapter I propose to give, shortly, the principal conclusions which, it appears to me, are suggested by a fairly painstaking analysis of the evidence.

I am under no illusions as to my scanty qualifications for this task. If I were, a criticism of my *Times* article<sup>176</sup> which appeared (anonymously) in *Nature*<sup>177</sup> ought, by now, to have removed them. It remarks, rather pontifically:

“... To a zoologist, Commander Gould’s acceptance and analysis of at least some of the evidence appears to be uncritical and even credulous, and his conclusion unjustified.”

And Dr. Calman, Keeper of Zoology in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, when commenting in the *Spectator*<sup>178</sup> upon my article, gave me a well-meant warning:

“Then, as to the evidence. Commander Gould has collected and proposes to publish the testimony of fifty-one witnesses.<sup>179</sup> There is no need to doubt the good faith of any of these; there is no reason to question that all of them saw something unusual in the familiar surroundings of the loch; but there is a possibility that neither they nor Commander Gould fully realise how easily and inevitably recollections of things seen become tinged and distorted by previous or even by subsequent impressions.”

Anything is possible which does not involve, when stated, a contradiction in terms. It may be, as Dr. Calman suggests, that I have as-

<sup>176</sup> Whose date was misquoted.

<sup>177</sup> 16.xii.34. *Nature* courteously sent me a copy of this issue—but, although I had all the cards in my hand, I did not reply. Anyone who sees fit to reflect on me anonymously may always be sure of having the field to himself.

<sup>178</sup> 22.xii.34.

<sup>179</sup> This was the number I gave in the *Times*. Since then, further evidence has come to hand; and, as already mentioned, I have discarded some testimony of slight value. Statements by fifty-eight witnesses are embodied in this book.

sisted various honest but self-deluded persons to create a zoological myth—but it is also possible that the witnesses may have seen, and I may have recorded statements concerning, a very singular spectacle—that of a living creature, unknown to science, disporting itself in a Scottish loch. And that is the conclusion to which—carefully bearing Dr. Calman’s warning in mind—my analysis has led me.

I do not propose to print it in full—it contains 644 entries, and would occupy several pages. It is based entirely upon the texts of evidence given in Chapter Two—and anyone who is interested has, in consequence, exactly the same material to work on as I have used. The leading points in it may, however, be briefly summarised.

First, as to X’s dimensions. On this point, some sections of the Press are responsible for a certain amount of misconception. Stress has been laid upon the fact that one witness has described the “monster” as being, say, 15 feet long, and another, later, as 8 or 9 feet—and paragraphs headed “The Dwindling Monster” have at once made their appearance. The authors of such paragraphs have either never known, or have overlooked, the somewhat important fact that neither witness has seen, or said that he saw, X’s total length. What has been seen, in such cases, is a single hump—only a part of the creature—and a part, moreover, whose apparent length naturally varies with its height above water, and is not likely to be absolutely constant, even granting that (which is most unlikely) two separate witnesses had identical “personal equations” when estimating dimensions, and saw X in absolutely identical circumstances. A journalist who should write a “s-care” article about an alarming shrinkage which had occurred in one of H.M. submarines—basing it upon one sighting of her when running with tanks blown, and another when trimmed for diving—would find some difficulty in placing it: yet the cases are exactly analogous.

Consider, on this point, the evidence of Mr. MacPhail (21), who watched X swimming slowly past him at less than 100 yards range. He first noticed a brown object, about a foot long, just showing above the surface. Gradually, this rose higher—and as it did so its visible length gradually increased to about 18 feet. Even then, he saw no head or tail—so that X’s total length must at least have been several feet more than this.

If X had always been seen as a single hump, of varying length, there would be no difficulty in supposing that its configuration was similar

to that of a large shark, or a whale; and that its total length was probably half as much again as that of the 40-foot hump seen, at a distance of about 170 yards, by Mr. Moir (19)—in other words, some 60 feet.

But while the single hump is by far the most usual of X's various aspects, it is by no means the only one. Here is a table of them, with their reference numbers:

*One hump* (broadside on): 1, 2, 4, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18 (possibly), 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27*c*, 27*d*, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34.

*One hump* (end on): 10*b*, 27*b* (possibly), 31.

*Two humps*: 3 (possibly), 5, 7, 32.

*Two humps* (plus head and neck): 23*a*, 35, 38.

*Three humps*: 3 (possibly), 24.

*Five humps*: 17.

*Six humps* (plus head and neck): 23*b*.

*Eight (or nine) humps*: 36.

*Head and neck only*: 18 (possibly), 25, 27*a*, 41.

*Head only*: 12.

In consequence, before any satisfactory estimate of X's length can be formed it would seem necessary to arrive, if possible, at some reasonable conclusion as to the nature of the humps, and the cause of the variations in their number and appearance. I may remark here, once and for all, that I do not intend to give different "weights" to portions of the evidence in accordance with any preconceived ideas of their probable value.

When two or more humps have been observed, they may have been:

- (a) Illusory.
- (b) Structural.
- (c) Voluntarily produced.

There is something to be said for the suggestion that the humps are illusory. The upper edge of a more or less cylindrical, dark body lying horizontal and almost awash might undoubtedly, if the water were rippling, appear to be a series of slight humps and depressions. And a similar effect might be anticipated if the body were moving rapidly, and thus forming a ripple in what would otherwise be calm water. It might, therefore, be contended that the line of humps seen by Miss Hamilton and her friends (17) would have coalesced if X had stopped;

and the same would apply, with greater force, to the six humps seen by Mr. Morrison (23*b*), since in the latter case X's speed was estimated to be some 13 knots. The two (or three) humps seen by Mr. Milne (3) might also be explained in this way.<sup>180</sup>

On the other hand, X has often been seen in one of its multiple-hump aspects when the Loch was absolutely calm, and when the creature itself was either moving very slowly or entirely motionless. I need only instance the two large and well-defined humps seen by Mrs. Mackay (5) and the similar appearance watched for some ten minutes, at a distance of 45 yards, by Miss N. Simpson (32). In the second case, X remained practically motionless throughout.

We may, therefore, conclude that the humps are, at least, not wholly—or even mainly—illusory.

That the humps are structural is, of course, the most natural supposition; and one of the witnesses, Mr. Goodbody (36)—who observed X in one of its more improbable aspects, a line of eight or nine similar humps—has expressed himself as decidedly of this opinion. The humps which we saw looked clearly structural, and not at all like the undulations of a straight body." It must be remarked, however, that the surface of the water was far from calm, that the observing conditions were very bad, and that X's appearance was observed to alter more than once—two large humps being succeeded by a line of several smaller, whose number varied from time to time.

The chief objection to the theory that the humps are structural resides in the enormous length which it postulates. Take, for example, the case of Mr. Moir's 40-foot hump. By submerging this more or less, we may reconcile it, as to length, with any other "one-hump" aspect. But if it be structural—unchangeable in outline—then, however far we submerge it to make it fit into one of the observed lines of humps, there must always be a gap of well over 40 feet between the rear of the hump preceding it and the front of the one following it. No such gap has been observed by any witness; and, treating the matter as a puzzle "to be solved in the fewest possible humps," the best arrangement which I can arrive at—one which, I must own, seems somewhat

<sup>180</sup> It might be contended that Mr. Morrison's sketch (fig. 17)—assuming the head and neck lowered—would look very like Mr. Moir's (fig. 12) if, on the supposition that the apparent humps were produced by X's high speed, we drew tangents from one to the other.



artificial—is this. Mr. Morrison's head and six humps, followed by the last two of Miss Hamilton's (identifying her No. 2 hump with Mr. Morrison's No. 5), followed by Mr. Moir's 40-foot hump (submerged); the (also submerged) rear of the procession being brought up by Mr. Goodbody's eight or nine humps—which, by his description, certainly appear to have been on or near X's tail. The total length of this cavalcade would be about 120 feet—nearly as long as Dr. Beebe's giant squid.

If we adopt the hypothesis—however irritating it may be to zoologists—that the humps are not permanent features of X's anatomy, but produced by vertical flexures of the back, the problem is considerably simplified: and in this case (as in others, to which I will refer presently) there is a good deal of evidence to support the supposition. While the humps have only once, so far (42), been definitely seen to alter their configuration under the observer's eye—although Mr. Goodbody's experience also goes fairly close to this—Mr. Carson (38) independently formed the opinion that the distance between the two humps which he saw was noticeably greater when X was in motion than when it was at rest. And Mr. Morrison (23*b*) describes X as moving “with an up-and-down motion,” like that of “a huge caterpillar.” The peculiar motion of the two humps seen by Mrs. Mackay (5) is also quite consistent with this supposition—and, to my mind, it is strongly suggested by Mr. Gillies' account (27*b*).

The three suppositions as to the nature of the humps are not, of course, mutually exclusive. For example, it is at least arguable that while the two large humps first seen by Miss Goodbody were produced by flexure of X's body, the line of small, regular humps which succeeded them were the wavy upper edge of a caudal fin. It is perfectly possible that, in all cases where a line of humps was observed, some part of this appearance was illusory, some part structural, and the rest produced by flexure. But to my mind the last assumption is, on the balance, the most likely of the three.

On this assumption, it is possible to confine X's dimensions within quite reasonable limits. The best actual evidence of length is, I think, provided by Miss Hamilton and her friends (17) since they had an excellent standard of comparison—the *Grant Hay*, which X appears to have been following. *Proxime accessit* I should place Mr. Moir's estimate, since it was made at close range—about 170 yards—and when X

was moving slowly. Combining the two with Mr. Morrison's, and taking account of the fact that in no case (presumably) was the extreme length visible, I arrive at a probable length of 45 feet or so.

Evidence as to the maximum diameter is afforded by Mr. Spicer (9), Comdr. Meiklem (104), Mrs. T. McLennan (11) and Mr. MacPhail (21) —and also, less directly, by several estimates of X's height above water when seen in the "one-hump" aspect. I consider, on the basis of all these taken conjointly, that the maximum diameter is probably 4-5 feet.

The accounts which describe the head and neck (18, 25, 27*a*, 41) are in general agreement. They indicate that the neck is at least 6 feet long, with a diameter of about a foot, being slightly tapered towards the head. The latter, as described by Mr. Palmer (12), is flat and about 18 inches wide overall, the width of the mouth being nearly as much. In profile, the diameter of the head does not appear to be much greater than that of the neck adjoining it. The latter has been seen strongly curved, and at other times practically straight.<sup>181</sup>

Mr. Cameron (15) the only witness who speaks definitely of seeing the tail, described it as long, and moving slowly from side to side.

There is general agreement, throughout the evidence, as regards X's ability to produce a violent and extensive commotion in the water around it, even though such portions of the body as may be visible exhibit practically no motion at all.<sup>182</sup> This is inconsistent with the supposition that such disturbance is produced by means of the tail; and, together with the statements of Mr. Gillies (27*b*) and Miss MacDonald (27*d*), leaves very little doubt that X possesses at least one pair of propelling fins or paddles.

X's colour is generally described as "dark" (practically all the evidence agrees on this, as far as it goes). The only exception is Mr. Cameron's sighting (30), on which occasion X looked dark when end-on, but "silvery" when broadside on. However, in this case the observer definitely stated that he considered the apparent change of colour to be caused by the reflection of sunlight from the skin. This

<sup>181</sup> Mr. Russell's account (25) suggests, however, that it is not so flexible laterally as it is fore-and-aft. Advocates of the "surviving plesiosaurus" theory may note that such a creature could not, it is believed, curve its neck to the form shown in Mr. Russell's sketch (fig. 19).

<sup>182</sup> See, for example, 13, 27*b* and 38.

may also explain Mr. McSkimming's observation, on the same occasion, that X appeared to be lighter in colour just below the water-line; although Mr. Moir's account (19) also tends to support this.

Most of the witnesses agree that the colour of the back, at any rate, is a darkish brown, which sometimes looks almost black. But a respectable minority (9, 10*b*, 11, 16) vote for elephant-grey. And it is a curious coincidence, if no more, that in those four cases it is at least reasonable to suppose that the portion of X visible had been out of water for some little time. It seems possible that X's skin appears a dark shade of brown when it emerges, and gradually lightens when drying in strong sunlight.

Comdr. Meiklem (10*b*), Mrs. Scott (16) and Mr. Jamieson (35) agree in describing the skin as granulated, or even warted, in surface—and the two former speak of a slight ridge, noticeably darker in colour than the rest of the body, along the crest of the back.<sup>183</sup>

The evidence of Mr. Palmer (12), if it stood alone, would suggest that X is an air-breather; but he heard no inhalation or exhalation—no “blowing”—and was doubtful whether X was actually breathing or merely basking in the sun. I originally considered that it might have gills—but, on the whole, I incline to the view that it is an air-breather: although it must, on this supposition, possess the power of remaining submerged for a very considerable period. I can offer no suggestion as to the nature of the two small “*antennæ*” seen by Mr. Palmer.

Finally, I see no reason for scouting the accounts of Mr. Spicer (9) and Mrs. T. MacLennan (11). For reasons already stated, I did not adduce them as arguments against any of the various explanations discussed in Chapter Two; but I consider that they ought to be taken into account in any complete analysis of the evidence. And I should certainly include Mr. Grant's account (37) in the same category if I thought that it belonged there; but while, as I have already remarked, I have no doubt that the encounter occurred, I am not equally certain that what he saw was X.

To my mind, the accounts of Mr. Spicer and Mrs. MacLennan indicate that X is capable of leaving the water to bask on the shore (in

<sup>183</sup> However, Mr. Cameron (30) did not see this ridge—although when viewing X end-on he remarked that the crest of the back looked sharp in outline, “like the back of a thin old horse.”

a place where this offers easy access); and of crawling, or otherwise progressing, for a very limited distance on land. There is nothing very surprising in the creature being able to leave the water for short periods: one with so flexible a back—and possessing so obvious a turn of speed, and such phenomenal paddle-power as the disturbances in its vicinity indicate—is not likely to be destitute of sufficient muscular power to move its own weight when this is no longer water-borne.

Summarising these conclusions, they are as follows. The “monster” has a length of some 45 feet (of which I should be inclined to allot 10 feet to the head and neck, 20 feet to the body, and 15 feet to the tail). The maximum diameter is some 5 feet or less. The neck and tail are tapering, and the latter possibly carries a serrated caudal fin. The head is comparatively small, not much larger than the neck—which can be elevated to a considerable height above water. The colour of the body, on first emerging, is a dark brown, which may lighten after exposure to strong sunlight. The skin is rough, presenting a granulated (but not scaled) appearance. A small ridge, darker in colour, runs along the crest of the back.

The body appears to be very flexible, both laterally and vertically; and can be contorted, at will, into a series of humps. It has at least two, and possibly four, paddles or flippers, probably placed low down on the body—and it appears to be able to use these for progression, to a limited extent, on land. Such are the conclusions which, I suggest, are indicated by the evidence. If anyone cares to compare them with those which I expressed, provisionally, in December, he will find that the points of difference are very few.<sup>184</sup>

And I deduce, from these conclusions, that the Loch Ness case is only unique in one particular; that the creature now in that Loch is of a type which has frequently been met with at sea—although never, until now, in fresh water. Anyone who refers to Dr. Oudemans’ book on the so-called “sea-serpent,”<sup>185</sup> or to my own, will find many similar cases.

In at least two of these the analogy, to my mind, is extraordinarily complete. They are the “New England sea-serpent” (1817–1819), and the creature seen in Loch Hourn (August 1872). Short accounts

<sup>184</sup> I have slightly reduced my estimate of X’s length, for the reasons explained in the footnote on p. 48.

<sup>185</sup> *The Great Sea-Serpent*, by A. C. Oudemans (Leiden and London, 1892).

of both cases will be found in the Appendix; but an outline of their special peculiarities may be useful here.

The early appearances of the New England creature were made in Gloucester harbour, Massachusetts—a much smaller area than Loch Ness. The witnesses—who numbered twelve—made sworn depositions before a Gloucester magistrate,<sup>186</sup> and these were collected and examined by an ad hoc committee appointed by the Linnean Society of Boston.<sup>187</sup> The testimony is in striking general agreement, and—taken in conjunction with the fact that most of the witnesses were seamen or fishermen, and all of them coast-dwellers—eliminates the supposition that any well-known creature was seen. The “monster,” which was often observed at very close range, was usually seen as a line of uniform humps—but on various occasions the outline of its back appeared perfectly smooth. And two witnesses deposed to having seen it lying partly on the shore, and partly in the water.

In the Loch Hourn case—which is much more recent, and occurred in Scottish waters—the chief witnesses were a party of six (including two clergymen) who saw the creature on two consecutive days, and on five or six separate occasions, at distances which were often less than 200 yards. It appeared as a line of humps (the head and neck were occasionally visible as well); sometimes exhibiting eight small and well-rounded humps (as in Mr. Goodbody’s experience) and at other times three or four, longer and flatter. In the latter case the apparent length of the line was somewhat *greater*, although the number of humps was less: giving the impression, as two of the witnesses observe,<sup>188</sup> of “a creature crooking up its back to sun itself,” and strongly suggesting that the humps were not structural, but caused by flexure.<sup>189</sup>

I have already alluded<sup>190</sup> to other points of the evidence—Mr. Russell’s sketch of X’s head and neck, and Miss Fraser’s account of the appendages at the side of the head—as being in remarkable, and independent, agreement with particulars of earlier cases: those of the crea-

<sup>186</sup> The Hon. Lonson Nash, J.P.

<sup>187</sup> John Davis, Jacob Bigelow and Francis C. Gray.

<sup>188</sup> Rev. J. Macrae, of Glenelg, and Rev. D. Twopeny, of Stockbury—in a letter to *The Zoologist*, May 1873.

<sup>189</sup> It must be added, however, that another of the party, Mr. G. Boyle, regarded the humps as being protuberances on the back of a “lizard-shaped reptile.”

<sup>190</sup> See p. 14.

tures seen by Captain Cringle and Dr. Matheson.<sup>191</sup> And I have pointed out that, in both instances, I ascertained that the witness had not previously heard of the earlier case. In this connection, it may be recalled that at the time when the “sea-serpent” seen from H.M.S. *Dædalus* was arousing much general interest, Professor Owen suggested, in a letter to the *Times*,<sup>192</sup> that some subconscious recollection of Pontopidan’s account had induced Captain M’Quhae to credit the creature with possessing, or appearing to possess, a mane. M’Quhae promptly replied that he had never seen, or even heard of, this account until after the voyage was over.

I hope that this incident may serve as a caution to those who suggest that the witnesses have been subconsciously influenced by fantastic picture-postcards, or by recollections of “sea-serpent” stories—even, it may be, by that little-known work *The Case for the Sea-Serpent*. I must plead guilty to having taken a copy of the book North with me, and I must also confess that I occasionally showed it to a witness<sup>193</sup>—but I made it my rule not to do so until after I had taken the statement, and to attach no weight to suggested modifications of this which I considered the book might possibly have inspired. I used its illustrations as a means by which witnesses who could not draw might be able to indicate something to me which more or less resembled what they described; and I consider that this was a very natural proceeding. If, for example, I were an insurance official, going to interview a witness who had seen a car accident, but could not tell the make of the car, I should certainly take an illustrated catalogue of cars with me. And if, for some reason (or prejudice), no such catalogue were available, I should certainly do my best to compile one of my own.

Finally, there is a familiar objection, raised once more in Dr. Calman’s article,<sup>194</sup> on which I should like to touch. He remarks:

“Dr. Oudemans and, more recently, Commander Gould have laboriously collated all the better-attested stories of the so-called ‘sea-serpent’ and believe that they can discern in them some shad-

<sup>191</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>192</sup> 14.xi.1848.

<sup>193</sup> To aggravate my offence, on my return South I sent several complimentary copies of the book to acquaintances in the Loch Ness district.

<sup>194</sup> See p. 126.

owy animal of monstrous size, of which not a bone, not a tooth, not a shred of skin, has ever come into the hands of a zoologist. It is possible that they are right, but it is only just possible.”

I dealt with this argument, at some length, in my former book.<sup>195</sup> But it may do no harm to give the heads of my reply here.

The view—very forcibly urged by Owen long ago—that such a creature as the so-called “sea-serpent” cannot possibly exist, because no vestige of its remains has ever been found, depends upon an assumption—or, rather, a string of assumptions—for which there is no evidence at all: and against which there is a good deal. The assumptions are, that such creatures must necessarily float when dead; that they must continue to do so until, ultimately, they are driven ashore; and that, once stranded, they must inevitably (before decomposition renders their presence insupportable) be examined by a qualified zoologist.

I need only point out that even a freshly-killed whale will not, as a rule, float unless you pump air into him; that the body only rises when partially decomposed, and only remains floating for a limited time, after which the gases escape and it sinks again; and that while considerable attention has been devoted, in recent years (particularly by our own authorities at the Natural History Museum) to obtaining particulars of stranded whales, it is still impossible to be certain that an event of the kind has not escaped even local attention. Moreover, there is a case on record (admittedly doubtful)<sup>196</sup> of a species of whale being known by a *single* specimen, accidentally stranded; and there are other instances, better authenticated, of species which have been seen at sea, but of which no specimen has been secured. And if such is the case with the whales, what are the odds against finding remains of a rarely-seen creature such as the “sea-serpent”?

In conclusion, I should like to recall the parallel case of the giant squid.

Stories of giant, many-armed sea-monsters—beasts capable of attacking boats, and even ships, and carrying off their crews—are to

<sup>195</sup> See chap. xii, “What becomes of the Body?”

<sup>196</sup> *Aodon Dalei*, stranded at Havre, September 1825. It may have been a variant form of *Mesoplodon bidens*.

be found among the folk-lore of all sea-faring nations.<sup>197</sup> Representations of such monsters are to be found here, there and everywhere; on Mycenaean urns, in stained-glass windows, in Japanese colour-prints and woodcuts. But until comparatively recent years no specimens of any such creature had ever come under scientific observation; and the efforts of such writers as Pontoppidan, and the even more credulous Denys de Monfort,<sup>198</sup> to compile such stories and distil some residue of truth from them, only succeeded in intensifying the popular view that the “Kraken” was a myth.

Gradually, however, this view was overborne by the weight of evidence. Reports, vague but persistent, accumulated of instances in which such creatures had been cast ashore; dead and mutilated, in most cases, but still recognisable. One was stranded off Zeeland in or about 1847, another at the Skaw in 1854, and one in the Shetland Isles in 1861. In the last-named year, too, occurred the famous case of the *Alecton*.

On November 30, 1861, the French corvette of that name encountered a giant squid swimming on the surface, about 120 miles north-eastward of Tenerife. After cannonading it ineffectually for some time, a fruitless attempt was made to haul it on board. The French officers estimated its length (less tentacles) at 15 feet, and its weight at 2 tons or so.

But the Académie des Sciences (to which the *Alecton*'s report was referred) maintained, in common with the general body of zoologists, a complacent attitude of “scientific caution”—in other words, of complete scepticism. And even when, as already related, carcasses of giant squid began to come ashore on the Newfoundland coast in the 'seventies, it is quite on the cards that even this inconvenient evidence might have been completely shelved, but for the efforts of two men—the Rev. M. Harvey, of Newfoundland, and Professor A. E. Verrill, of Yale. Harvey collected accounts and specimens, and Verrill discussed them; and the publication of his results<sup>199</sup> speedily transformed what had hitherto been regarded as an old wives' tale into an accepted scientific fact.

<sup>197</sup> This paragraph, and the two succeeding, are taken, practically verbatim, from *The Case for the Sea Serpent*.

<sup>198</sup> See his *Histoire Nouvelle des Mollusques*, tom. 2, Paris, An. x (1802).

<sup>199</sup> In the *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 1879.



I have often speculated (my knowledge of colloquial French is somewhat sketchy) upon the precise language which would have been used, by those seamen of the *Alecton* who had strained and sweated for hours under the blazing sun in a vain effort to secure their “poulp,” towards any pundit who informed them that they were undoubtedly the victims of some form of mass-hallucination, and that the creature which they had struggled so hard to capture could not possibly be anything more than a figment of their excited imaginations.



## SUMMARY

On the evidence there can, I suggest, be little question that Loch Ness contains a specimen of the rarest and least-known of all living creatures. It might almost be termed a type-specimen; because it combines the salient features of almost all the best-authenticated reports of “sea-serpents,” as well as possessing at least one feature—the ability to live in fresh water—which is entirely novel.<sup>200</sup>

That it is of “sea-serpent” type, I consider to be demonstrated; but I have no ready answer to the question, “What species of creature is a sea-serpent—assuming that such exists?” Of the very few zoologists who have accepted that assumption, Dr. Oudemans thinks that they are pinnipeds—members of the seal family; E. G. Racovitza questions this view, but expresses no alternative theory<sup>201</sup> and Dr. Georges Petit, of the Paris Museum of Natural History, considers that they are an unknown species of fish.<sup>202</sup> Not being a zoologist, I hesitate to express an opinion which must, of necessity, have very little value; but it may be of some slight interest to record that, as the result of the evidence which I collected at Loch Ness, I have modified one which I formerly held. I suggested, in my former book, that the majority of “sea-serpent” reports originated in a creature which was either a descendant of the plesiosaurus, or had evolved along similar lines. Of these two alternatives, I regard the second as far the more probable—but I should now incline to consider the accidental resemblance as less perfect, in point of detail, than I once did. On the analogy of the giant squid—a vastly-enlarged, but recognisable, reproduction of a small and well-known creature—I should look for the prototype of the Loch Ness “monster,” and other “sea-serpents” in some such creature as the common newt. That they are a vastly-enlarged, long-necked, marine form of the newt is the hypothesis which, however improbable it may appear, I should personally be inclined to favour; and I am glad

<sup>200</sup> The power of locomotion on land is not an entirely unprecedented feature; the New England specimen seems to have exhibited this to a limited extent. See pp. 183, 184.

<sup>201</sup> *Bulletin de la Société Zoologique de France*, 1902.

<sup>202</sup> See his article in *Je Sais Tout* (Paris, February 1934).

to note that it has recently been endorsed by Mr. Malcolm Burr, D.Sc., in *The Nineteenth Century*.<sup>203</sup>

Whatever X may be, there is little doubt that it originally made its way into Loch Ness from the sea, and that it finds its present habitat a refuge from its natural enemies, the sperm whale and the “killer.” Is it to have other enemies? Not being a seal, a salmon or any species of wild bird, the law at present gives it no protection—it is *feræ naturæ*, at the mercy of any sportsman’s rifle or harpoon. Last summer, more than one attempt was made to shoot it, and also to capture it by means of a baited hook depending from a drifting buoy. Such attempts, although discouraged by the local police, are in no way illegal—and they might easily prove fatal; a whale has been killed, before now, by a single rifle-bullet. If shot, X will probably sink—and, unless trawled for with promptitude and great good luck, be lost to science for ever.<sup>204</sup>

As already mentioned, the local police have instructions to warn all residents and visitors that they must not attempt to molest the “monster.” So far as I can discover, the position of the various authorities—the Ness Fishery Board, the Fishery Board for Scotland and the Scottish Office—is that without the backing of a special Act of Parliament they have no power to take any further steps for X’s protection. And they are not disposed to promote such an Act, since they consider the existing “police protection” to be adequate for the purpose.

I do not think so. To be warned by a policeman, particularly if he happens to be a Scotsman, is a solemn thing, God wot; but if in this case any rash Sassenach were to flout the warning, I am morally certain that, so long as he refrained from a breach of the peace, no police-officer could lay a finger on him until after the event—when very little consolation would be derived from prosecuting him for not having a gun licence, or something trivial of that kind.

<sup>203</sup> February 1934—in an article entitled “Sea-Serpents and Monsters.”

<sup>204</sup> In a recent pamphlet (*The Loch Ness Animal*, Leyden, 1934) Dr. A. C. Oudemans urges X’s immediate capture and destruction, in order that it may grace the Royal Scottish Museum. Scientifically considered, I suppose that much can be said for this proposal: but to my mind it may with equal justice be termed cruel and unnecessary. Adequate photographic study of the living creature, as suggested further on, may not improbably yield more valuable results, scientifically speaking, than its attempted capture.

Whatever instructions they may have received, the Loch Ness police have no more legal right to prevent anyone from molesting the “monster” than they have to insist that he should refrain from blowing his nose. And no instructions from any superior authority can legalise the unlawful exercise of authority, or penalise an act which the law does not forbid. I have no doubt that the joint good sense of the local police and of almost all the visitors to Loch Ness will ensure X’s being, in general, left unmolested—but the fact remains that any wanton lout may, if he chooses, brush all warnings aside and sally forth, bulging with lethal weapons and confidently assured that so long as he confines his activities to merely killing or wounding X the legal consequences will, at worst, be trifling.

When a sportsman of this type attempted to shoot “Pelorus Jack”<sup>205</sup> in 1904, the New Zealand House of Representatives took immediate action. They passed an Order in Council, making any further attempt of the kind a felony. And I entirely agree with Mr. A. Russell Smith—who has made persistent, but fruitless, attempts to obtain better protection for X<sup>206</sup>—that a short Act of the kind is greatly needed in the present instance. I am afraid, however, that there does not seem to be much hope of obtaining one.

Loch Ness is so large that the chance of capturing X alive and uninjured is remote. This could scarcely be done except with nets—and a net of the size required (about 3,000 feet by 900 feet) would require a small fleet of tugs to manipulate it, and would entirely block all traffic through the Canal for the time being.

There remains the possibility of studying the creature by means of photography. An ordinary photograph, unless taken when the head and neck are raised, would probably reveal little—but one taken from vertically above X, or almost so, would reveal, at one exposure, all its characteristic features.

<sup>205</sup> “Pelorus Jack” was a grampus (*Grampus griseus*) about 14 feet long, which used to escort steamers through French Pass, Cook Strait, N.Z. He performed his self-appointed duties with the utmost regularity, and became a national institution. He has not been seen since 1912.

<sup>206</sup> Several Scottish newspapers of January 2, 1934, contain extracts from his correspondence with Sir Murdoch Macdonald (M.P. for Inverness) on the subject.

An aeroplane, even of the autogiro type, is hardly suited to this work, on account of its noise and speed<sup>207</sup> but excellent pictures could probably be obtained from a “blimp.” Since the work would best be done in calm weather, no great engine-power would be necessary; and noise could be eliminated, as far as possible, by means of careful silencing and the use of an oversize, slow-speed, designedly-inefficient propeller. A craft of the kind, carrying a pilot and photographer, kept ready in a hangar (at Foyers, say) and directed by wireless telephony in accordance with telephone reports from observation-posts at various points round the Loch, ought to be able—given a single fine day—to furnish information of the greatest scientific interest; and not, perhaps, altogether devoid of commercial value.

Such a plan, while costly, is perfectly practicable; and it is, in my judgment, the only method of obtaining further information about the “monster” (apart from casual sightings) which is worth considering seriously.

These are hard times—and no doubt most people will hold that at present any expenditure upon scientific research needs, for its justification, a clear proof that some immediate and definite advantages will thereby be secured. Yet Scotland, in the past, has never been backward in promoting the advancement of knowledge—and I cannot believe that the countrymen of Napier, and of Kelvin, will always be content to leave the Loch Ness “monster” without legal protection, or to allow its nature and affinities to remain for ever undetermined.

<sup>207</sup> One or two observation-flights were made over the Loch last autumn. Whether their object was scientific investigation or publicity is a point upon which I express no opinion—but they were effected in conditions of weather which made searching for X a mere waste of time, money and petrol.

I have heard a rumour, however, that a seaplane, flying over the Loch in May 1933, had actually seen X. I have not succeeded in obtaining any concrete information on this point.

## Some Supplementary Cases

Correspondence in various papers on the subject of the Loch Ness “monster” brought to light details of a good many other “sea-serpent” cases, some of which were new to me. I did my best to follow these up, and to obtain any further evidence which might be available. Once or twice, I came upon a mare’s nest; and in other instances I decided that the evidence could either be explained away or was, at best, unconvincing. This chapter contains short notes upon the remaining cases.

In some instances, the information has already appeared in print—but I have done my best to confirm and amplify it by correspondence. I do not regard every case as being of equal value; but it seems unlikely that, except in one or two of them, any further evidence will come to light—and at all events no harm will be done by putting that already available on record here.

In connection with the Loch Ness “monster,” special attention may be directed to the vertical undulations of the creature seen from the *Avalanche*, the long neck observed by Sir Arthur Rostron and Captain Birnie, the curious resemblance between Mr. Eliassen’s sketch (fig. 35) and Mr. Jamieson’s (fig. 26) and the equally curious resemblance (as described) between the creatures seen by Mrs. MacLennan (11) on the shore of Loch Ness and by Dr. Paton on that of Kilbrannan Sound.

### Ha Long Bay, 1897–8

At the time when I wrote *The Case for the Sea-Serpent* I had not come across a monograph on the subject<sup>208</sup> by E. G. Racovitza, a Rumanian naturalist who took part in the *Belgica* Antarctic expedition of 1897–9.<sup>209</sup> Much of this is devoted to an excellent account of two creatures seen, in or near Ha Long Bay (French Indo-China), by the French gun-

<sup>208</sup> Published in the *Bulletin de la Société Zoologique de France*, 1902.

<sup>209</sup> Under Lieut. A. de Gerlache de Gomery. This was the first expedition to winter in the Antarctic regions.

boat *Avalanche*.<sup>210</sup> The accounts given are based upon a contemporary interview with Lieut. Lagrésille, her commander, which appeared in the *Courrier de Haiphong* (No. 1332, 5.iii.1898); but M. Racovitza confirmed this account, in January 1903, by correspondence with M. Lagrésille and with another officer, M. de Ligny. The following extracts are translated from his monograph.

(LIET. LAGRÉSILLE'S STATEMENT)

"In July last [1897 R.T.G.] the *Avalanche* sighted, for the first time, off Along Bay,<sup>211</sup> two animals of curious form and considerable size; their length being estimated at about 20 metres, and their diameter at 2 or 3 metres. The distinguishing characteristic of these animals was, that their bodies were not rigid, as is the case with the known species of whales, but had undulatory movements similar to those of serpents, only in a vertical sense.

"A quickfirer was loaded, and a shot fired at 600 metres range, which proved slightly too short. They at once dived, blowing noisily and leaving behind them a disturbance resembling breakers. They did not reappear, although some considered that their heads showed again, looking quite small.

"On February 15 of this year [1898, R.T.G.], while crossing Faisi-Long bay, I noticed similar creatures. I gave chase to them, and manned the quickfirers. Several shots were fired at one of them, and at least two of these burst on the surface very near it—but apparently without doing any injury.<sup>212</sup> I also tried to ram it—but it had more speed than the *Avalanche*. However, as often as it got into shoal water it headed about, which enabled me to gain upon it—and which also proves its considerable size.

It broke surface frequently, and when doing so its undulatory motion was always noticeable. Each appearance was preceded by a jet of water, or rather a vaporisation of the water, produced by a violent 'blow': differing thus from the method of ordinary 'blowing' creatures, which draw in water, and eject it to some height.<sup>213</sup> The

<sup>210</sup> A shallow-draught twin-screw Red River gun-boat, 140 tons, maximum draught about 4 feet, speed (nominal) 9 knots, two 3.5 inch guns and three (revolving) quickfirers.



animal was grey in colour, with several black fins.<sup>214</sup> It could easily be tracked by its exhalations, which formed circles on the surface (then completely calm) 4–5 metres in diameter. On one occasion I thought that I had come up with it; but at that moment it must have dived, for it reappeared astern of the gunboat. The chase was carried on, unsuccessfully, for an hour and a half; but had to be abandoned at nightfall.

“On February 24 [1898 R.T.G.], two similar creatures were again seen in Fai-tsi-Long bay by the *Avalanche*, which then had also on board the commanding officer and eight other officers, of the *Bayard*.

“One of them was chased for 35 minutes, and on one occasion it was seen very distinctly on the beam, about 200 yards away, floating horizontally. It exhibited three connected undulations, and also its head, which much resembled that of a seal, but was about twice the size. We could not see whether there was a neck connecting this to a body of relatively much larger dimensions. This is the only occasion on which the undulations were seen without gaps between them. Until then, it was possible to consider that what was taken for them was, in reality, structural humps [“bosses,” R.T.G.] which appeared successively—but all the witnesses agreed that doubt on this point was no longer possible, for they had seen, before the undulations took shape, the animal showing evenly above water along its whole length. Two of the officers present possessed cameras; now would have been the time to use them—but both were so surprised at what they saw that, when they thought of bringing the cameras to bear, the animal dived, emerging much further off and in circumstances much less favourable for taking a photograph.

“To sum up, the animals seen from the *Avalanche* are at present unknown. Their length is about 20 metres (minimum),<sup>215</sup> their colour grey and black. The head resembles that of a seal, and the body is subject to undulations which are sometimes much accentuated. The back has a saw-toothed appearance, which prevents their being thought to resemble any known species of whale. ... Incontestably these animals have furnished the Annamites with their conception of the Dragon. ...”

## (M. DE LIGNY'S STATEMENT)

"I saw what we then termed the 'big serpent,' but I did not photograph it. The attempts made to do so by one of the lieutenants (since resigned) named Buisson, were unsuccessful. The camera was a small one, while the creature was a long way off, and its movements impossible to foresee. ...

"We had left Along bay, and were entering that of Phai-tsi-Long when we caught sight of the creature. At first it seemed to be an ordinary whale—its bulk, its blowing, its intermittent appearance and disappearance, all led us to this conclusion. By reason of our limited speed we could not come up with it, the more so as its movements were irregular and its course variable.

"On a single occasion we saw it close-to, and doubt as to its general appearance was no longer possible. Its appearance was as follows: a large, black, rounded body, round like that of a big whale, and then a *sinuous* portion which, while not emerging completely, appeared to connect the body with the head. The last-named was moderately large, but seeming to continue the neck, rather oval in shape, and pierced with two openings. Finally, there was a kind of dorsal ridge resembling the teeth of a saw.

"... In consequence of its mobility, rather than of its actual speed, we were not able to get very close to it, but all the points mentioned herein were distinctly observed by us."

I believe that similar creatures have been seen, on subsequent occasions, near Along Bay, but at present I have no details of these cases. The accounts of MM. Lagrésille and de Ligny leave no doubt,

<sup>211</sup> Ha Long (Along) Bay and Fai-tsi-Long Bay (roughly 21° N., 107° E.), lie side by side, and are fronted by an extensive archipelago. Their waters are shallow (everywhere less than 5 fathoms) and studded with islets and shoals.

<sup>212</sup> This is a free translation. The text is: "... au moins deux projectiles l'atteignirent sans avoir semblé lui faire le moindre mal, les obus éclatant à la surface." As M. Racovitza remarks, we must assume that the shells burst on the surface of the water, and not that the creature was armour-plated.

<sup>213</sup> M. Racovitza, in a footnote, points out that this is erroneous; but he concludes that the "blowing" was not that of a cetacean, and that the creature probably breathed through nostrils, as a seal does.

<sup>214</sup> M. Racovitza suggests that this was an illusion produced by the creature's motion.

<sup>215</sup> Roughly, 65½ feet.

I suggest, that what they saw was neither a whale nor a large shark, and that it possessed the power of flexing its back into a succession of humps. The accounts also suggest that it is an air-breather—but Dr. Georges Petit, dealing with the same evidence, has arrived at the conclusion<sup>216</sup> that the apparent “blowing” was, in reality, a disturbance or splash caused by the sudden emergence of the head.

## Oslo Fiord, 1902

Miss K. Kören, of Oslo,<sup>217</sup> has kindly furnished me with some particulars of a creature seen by her uncle, Dean S. S. Kören, and several other witnesses,<sup>218</sup> on August 4, 1902, at the south end of Oslo fiord. The following extracts are taken from an account by one of the witnesses—the Rev. Hans Davidsen—which appeared at the time, and which was reprinted in the (Oslo) *Aftenpost* of February 25, 1933. The party were crossing the fiord in Mr. Davidsen’s small sailing-yacht, the *Tonny*, and were, at the time, in about 58° 56½’ N., 10° 58’ E.

“It was about 3:30 p.m.; a slight drizzle could be felt in the gentle breeze which was blowing; the sea was calm and the visibility good. Suddenly one of the party exclaimed, ‘What’s that over there?’ pointing to the port quarter—where a disturbance could be seen, which appeared to be moving rapidly on a course which would take it under the yacht’s stern.

“We soon saw that it was an unknown marine animal, moving—so far as we could judge—at about 16 knots.<sup>219</sup> It was from 1 to 2 cables off.<sup>220</sup>

“Occasionally, three huge humps showed above the surface, and three of the party also saw the creature’s head, which was oblong in outline and whose length they estimated at about 3 feet. The humps formed a continuous row, and were dark in colour, with a shiny surface. They seemed to be rather more than 2 feet in diameter. The animal’s motion—when seen broadside-on, as we saw

<sup>216</sup> In his *Je Sais Tout* article (February 1934) already mentioned.

<sup>217</sup> I am indebted to Mr. H. Bruff, Pateley Bridge, for putting me into communication with Miss Kören.

<sup>218</sup> The party consisted of Dean Kören, J. Aars, Rev. Hans Davidsen, S. Lie-Heidenrich, A. Davidsen, E. Davidsen, G. Landmark and four children.

it—appeared undulating. When first observed, it was coming from Heia and heading for Koster; but when it had reached a point well astern of the yacht it altered course towards the Griseboa lightship—that is, to seaward.

“It is impossible to give an exact estimate of the creature’s length. So far as we could see, the head and the three visible humps probably measured 20 feet long overall. Taking into consideration the distance between the head and the humps, and the length and thickness of the latter, the creature’s total length may easily have been 50–60 feet. We all observed that the humps were connected, and could not have belonged to a number of creatures swimming in line.

“Owing to the animal’s great speed, it left a wide wake in its rear. We did not see any foam, but we all noticed that the front portion of the body caused a considerable bow-wave. The head was carried close to the surface of the water, in a slightly oblique position. One of the passengers thought that he could discern a fin on the creature’s back. We kept it under observation for between five and ten minutes—both with the naked eye and with powerful glasses.”

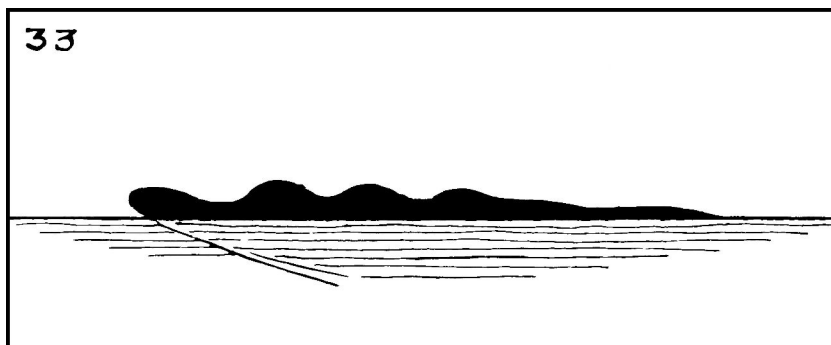


Fig. 33.—CREATURE SEEN IN OSLO FIORD.

<sup>219</sup> The text gives the speed as “4 mil” (“ca. 4 mil i timen”). I take this “mil” to be the “sjomil,” or “sea-mile,” which is equal to 4 nautical miles.

<sup>220</sup> 200–400 yards.

Fig. 33 is drawn from a sketch by Mr. Davidsen, reproduced in the *Aftenpost*. The originals of the account and the sketch are to be found in the church-register of Hvaler, Mr. Davidsen's parish.<sup>221</sup>

### Off Galley Head, Co. Cork<sup>222</sup>

On Friday, April 26, 1907, a strange sea-creature was seen from the bridge of the Cunard liner *Campania*, by her first and third officers. The former is now Sir Arthur Rostron<sup>223</sup>—until recently Commodore of the Cunard Line—and the latter Captain H. C. Birnie, R.N.R., an Elder Brother of Trinity House.

Here is Sir Arthur's account, as given in his book, *Home from the Sea* (1931, pp. 48, 49):

"We were coming ... into Queenstown<sup>224</sup> when, off Galley Head, I noticed something sticking up out of the water.

"'Keep clear of the snag right ahead,' I called out to the junior officer who was with me on the bridge.

"We swung away a point but gradually drew nearer so that we were able to make out what the unusual thing was. It was a sea monster! It was no more than fifty feet from the ship's side when we passed it, and so both I and the junior officer had a good sight of it. So strange an animal was it that I remember crying out 'It's alive!' ... I wished as never before that I had a camera in my hands. Failing this ... I made sketches of the animal, full face and profile, for the thing was turning its head from side to side for all the world as a bird will on a lawn, between its pecks.

"I was unable to get a clear view of the monster's 'features,' but we were close enough to realise that its head rose some eight

<sup>221</sup> I infer that Mr. Davidsen is no longer living. He also inserted, in the register, an account of a somewhat similar creature seen by three local fishermen in 1898. I have a copy of this—but it is second-hand evidence.

<sup>222</sup> I apologise to the Free State Government for not using the Erse equivalent: but, in the first place, I do not know it—and, secondly, I doubt whether many readers would recognize it.

<sup>223</sup> Who, it will long be remembered, took the *Campania*—which he then commanded—at full speed through floating ice in pitch darkness to pick up the survivors of the *Titanic*.

or nine feet out of the water, while the trunk of the neck was fully twelve inches thick."

In a recent letter to me, Sir Arthur remarks that it was just getting dusk at the time, but that the creature was clearly discernible from the bridge. Fig. 34 is from a sketch in this letter. I sent a tracing of it to Captain Birnie, and in reply he observed "... the sketch you sent me agrees precisely with what I saw in company with Sir Arthur Rostron, the only exception being that when I saw it it was not perpendicular but at an angle with the surface of the water."

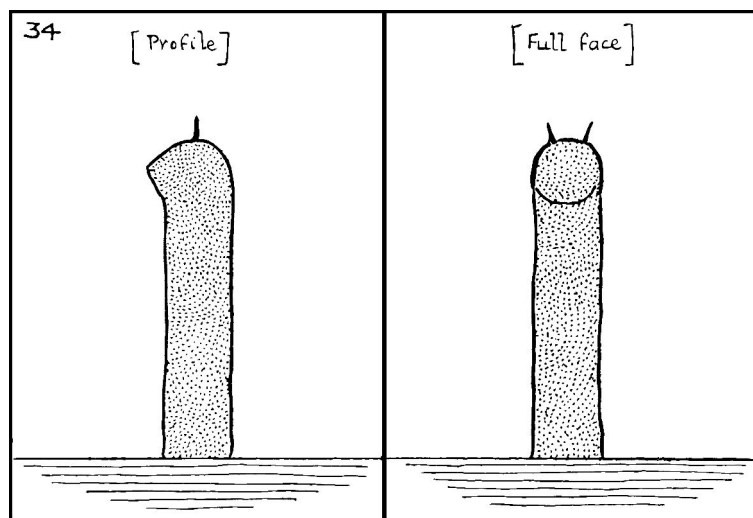


Fig. 34.—SIR ARTHUR ROSTRON'S SEA-MONSTER.

The following is Captain Birnie's account of the sighting, in the same letter:

"What we saw, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile away, corresponds closely with sketches 1 and 4 of your article<sup>225</sup> to-day. There was the long neck ending in a smallish head, but not reared quite so high out of the water as in sketch 1. Then a space of water ... and then a long series of small humps, separated by spaces of water exactly as in sketch 4.

"I flew into the house for the field-glasses, but by the time I returned with them the creature had sunk.

<sup>224</sup>This, I do know, is now "Cobh."

“Of course we got mercilessly teased ... and told that it must have been a school of porpoises. But I know a school of porpoises when I see one, and we were quite convinced that we had seen some extraordinary monster.

“I cannot give a definite date, but remembering this episode I was enormously interested in an article in some paper not long ago, describing how some similar creature had been sighted by a ship homeward bound off the south coast of Ireland, and how on arrival at Liverpool the officer in question heard a story of a man found adrift in a rowing boat in the Bristol Channel, having lost his oars in a struggle with some unknown marine monster.<sup>226</sup> At the time I remember calculating that this happened just about the same time. ... We thought the creature was at least 50 feet long—it was moving very lazily across the bay towards the estuary of the Camel River.”

I have traced some particulars of the Bristol Channel creature, but they are very disappointing. The account which Sir Arthur Rostron saw, and which converted his captain, appeared in the *Liverpool Echo* (an evening paper) of Tuesday, April 30, 1907—having been lifted, with the usual acknowledgement, from the current issue of the *Daily Chronicle*. I give it as it appeared in the latter—promising that I literally cannot make head or tail of the creature it purports to describe, and that I only print it because I took a good deal of trouble to run it down. It is headed, and sub-headed, “Fight with a ‘Sea-Serpent’—Adventure in the Bristol Channel.”

“A Clevedon (Somerset) correspondent forwards the following story of a strange adventure which he says befel Mr. M’Naughton, a Scottish visitor to the town. The incident, which occurred on Sunday last, was, he says, witnessed by many spectators:

<sup>225</sup> In the *Times*, 9.xii.33. Sketch 1, in that article, corresponds with fig. 19 of this book, and sketch 4 with fig. 44a.

<sup>226</sup> Probably an account of Sir Arthur Rostron’s experience which appeared in the *Daily Mail*, 23.x.33 (Mrs. Adkins’ letter is dated December 9 following). Another account of the *Campania*’s creature—the first, I believe, to be printed—appeared in the *Wide World Magazine* for December 1924.

“Mr. M’Naughton was quietly rowing in a little skiff about a mile off the Clevedon pier when a large snaky object, which he describes as ‘like a huge mummy with sunken eyes enveloped in a sort of hairy flap’ suddenly appeared at the rear of the boat, about twenty yards away. It approached by a series of leaps and dives, causing the sea to be greatly disturbed. Mr. M’Naughton says that by plunging the oars into the surf he endeavoured to keep his antagonist at bay. But his efforts were only momentarily successful. In a few seconds it had reached within a few yards of the boat.

“‘I can only dimly recollect what happened,’ he continued. ‘The flabby monster seemed to leap straight out of the water—straight as an arrow at me. I hardly know what I did. I think I must have ducked and crashed the oar into the creature; at any rate, I was flung violently into the water. When I regained the surface, I managed to clamber into the boat. My terrible opponent was nowhere in sight. In a dazed condition, I succeeded in reaching Portishead.’”

Which is a good 5 miles from Clevedon, although he was about a mile from Clevedon pier when attacked. For this and other reasons, including the cautionary “he says” inserted in the *Chronicle* office, I attach no importance whatever, as evidence, to this account. It is at third hand; it is chiefly the work of some unnamed person who—quite obviously—is writing for effect; and, so far as I know, it is entirely unconfirmed, although “witnessed by many spectators.”<sup>227</sup> I regard its association with the *Campania*’s creature as a pure—and, to my mind, rather regrettable—coincidence.

## Off Ingöy, Norway, about 1910

The following experience was communicated to the (Oslo) *Tidens Tegn*<sup>228</sup> by Mr. R. Eliassen, a teacher of Sandvikaer. He stated that,

<sup>227</sup> I made a short search (up to May 7) in the *Daily Chronicle* files, but could find no further reference to the incident.

I also addressed an enquiry to the *Clevedon Mercury*. I am indebted to its Editor, Mr. W. F. Sercombe, for the information that enquiries made locally at the time completely failed to substantiate the story. It appears to have been a hoax.

<sup>228</sup> “No. 3, Sunday issue, 1934.” I am indebted to Miss K. Kören for this account.



while the incident occurred some twenty-five years ago, he had not published any account of it earlier as he feared general ridicule. In view of the interest aroused by the Loch Ness reports, he now sent it to the Press.

“About twenty-five years ago, on a late summer day, my father and I were fishing off Ingöy, in Finnmark, some distance from shore. The weather was glorious, and as calm as it ever can be in these waters. ... Dotted about on the sea were other boats, also fishing; however, ours was somewhat apart from the rest. ... Suddenly a creature rose to the surface some 50 yards from us. I saw it first; and as it was so unlike any marine creature which I knew, I drew my father’s attention to it. We both watched it for some time—and its appearance made so deep an impression on my mind that even now, after many years, I can visualise its details quite clearly.

“A long neck, with a small head on it, rose 5—or possibly even 6—feet above the water. Behind the neck was a long hump, of about the same length. Astern of this the body was submerged for a short distance, but then rose again in the form of a larger hump—suggesting that those portions of it which remained hidden under the surface must be of great size. ... As our excitement and fear increased, I began to row the boat away from this strange monster;

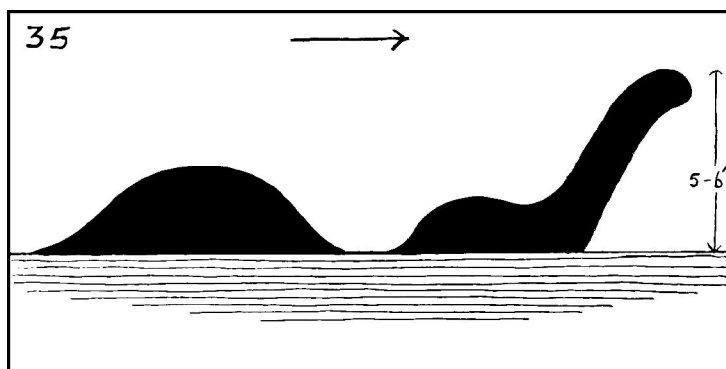


Fig. 35.—CREATURE SEEN BY MR. ELIASSEN.

while my father hauled in our lines and then helped to row, in a manner which indicated that he, too, did not feel quite safe. Meanwhile, the creature had calmly submerged, and the sea was again as smooth as before. I should add that we had not observed it to

have any forward motion—nor did we see it make any movement, except a slight deflection of its head.

“After covering perhaps a hundred yards, we stopped rowing; we had come much closer to the other boats, and this gave us confidence. However, hardly had we stopped when the monster came up again—this time, only a few yards from us. It moved its head in much the same way as a duck does when swimming, and then turned it towards us, as if it had just noticed our presence. Immediately afterwards, it submerged again—without, however, showing any sign of alarm.

“We were so surprised at its sudden reappearance that we did not think of calling to the other boats ... as darkness began to fall, we all rowed back to the shore.”

Fig. 35 is redrawn from a sketch by Mr. Eliassen which accompanied his account. It should be compared with fig. 26, which represents the Loch Ness “monster” as sketched by Mr. G. Jamieson. There is no reasonable doubt that the two drawings are completely independent.

## Connemara, Ireland, 1910

A recent book by Mr. G. F. M. Cornwallis-West<sup>229</sup> quoted a letter from Mr. Howard St. George, Ramsbury, Wilts, describing a strange sea-creature seen by himself and his son on the Connemara coast some years earlier. A letter from Mr. St. George to myself confirms this account (the only one yet printed) and adds some further particulars. He writes:

“The *locus in quo* is the wild Atlantic coast of Kilkerrin Bay, Connemara—no house or people about. We were coming home in my practically-silent small motor-launch to my fishing lodge of ‘Screebe,’ Connemara, and travelling against the tide.

“The ‘Beast’ was floating down on the ebb about 80 yards from us and showed a large brown surface as big as a large 2-horse lorry, its head and long neck<sup>230</sup> moving from side to side observing. ...

<sup>229</sup> *Edwardians Go Fishing* (Putnam, London and New York, n.d. = 1932).

“As there are lots of queer sea occupants in that wild region—sunfish<sup>231</sup> of 400 lbs. and any amount of seals—and we were very tired, we did not stop to observe, but had a good look at it. We were heavy laden—we shot the largest grey seal I ever saw, an old bull 8 ft. long, etc.—and were in no humour to tackle any more; also, we were rather appalled at the animal!

“It was *not* a seal; we know all about them, and shot quantities of them as they destroyed our salmon—also we used to get huge rays, dog-fish, skates, sharks, etc.”

### Off Bogen Fiord, Norway, 1914

Particulars of yet another Norwegian sighting in recent years were communicated to me by Mr. W. E. Parkin, of the Corolite Construction Co. From 1910 to 1914 he was resident at Bogen, Norway, as office manager of the A/B Ofotens Malmfalt (Ofoten Iron Mines, Ltd.). He does not remember the exact date of his sighting, but it must have been in June or July 1914. The scene of the incident, and the approximate track of the creature, are shown in fig. 36. Here are some extracts from his letter:

“It was a glorious summer afternoon ... the sea, I remember, was delightfully calm, not a ripple on it and as smooth as glass.

“The ladies used to amuse themselves by fishing with a line from one of the piers, and it was whilst engaged in this pastime that one of them ... ran into my office exclaiming, ‘Do come out and see what an extraordinary thing has just come into the bay!’

“What met my gaze was an object sticking out of the water at an angle of approximately 45°. It appeared, from where I was, to be about five or six feet out of the water. It was not curved, but straight, like an arm projecting from the water. Behind it was a gap, and then several regular humps. The largest number I counted at one time was seven, and the smallest five. ...

<sup>230</sup> In the published account, he speaks of this neck as being about 6 feet long, and held erect.

<sup>231</sup> In this case, the real thing, not basking-sharks. See footnote on p. 105.

"The creature—or fish, whichever you like to call it—came slowly across the bay; and, as it did so, made a V right across, which eventually touched the shore (just as a duck makes when swimming a small pond—but the V made by this thing was, of course, enormous). When it got across the bay, I assume it touched land,<sup>232</sup> for it hesitated some time, and stopped short as if wondering what to do next.

"It could not have been several objects following each other, for the stoppage was automatic—in the sense that the whole affair was simultaneous. We had visits, from time to time, of seals and porpoises, and their movements were quite familiar—so there could be no confusion on that score.

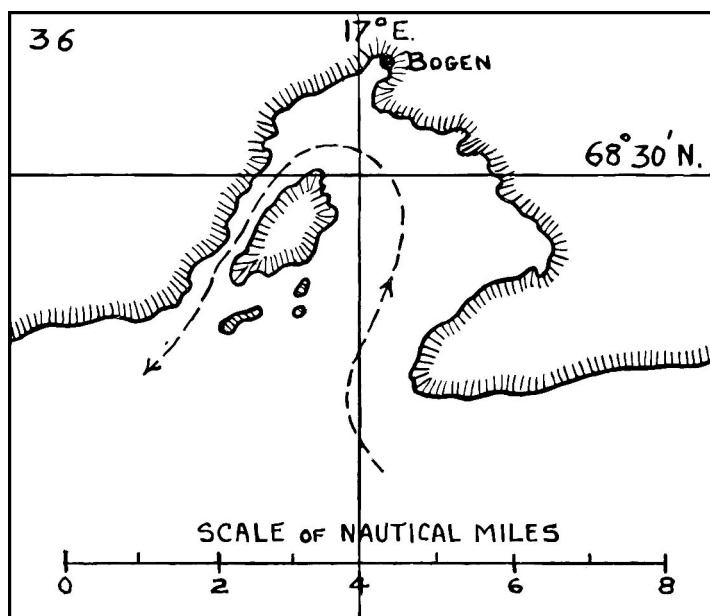


Fig. 36.—VICINITY OF BOGEN.

"As it occurred in the afternoon, all the men and staff were engaged on their usual occupations well away from the shore—there were not many people saw the thing. There were, I remember, the ladies mentioned, myself and some of the office staff, the pier mas-

<sup>232</sup> I.e. touched bottom.

ter and local postmaster, and the remainder were youngsters and old folk.

“The excitement was intense—the locals ran along the shore, the piermaster got into a boat, others got out their ponies, all with the idea of getting a better view or of intercepting the beast. This commotion evidently startled it, and it turned in the direction of the Fiord; and, being in line and not at right angles, I couldn’t see how it moved very well—all I saw was this arm or head sticking out, which gradually disappeared from view. ...

“The incident was the local seven days’ wonder, nothing like it had previously happened within memory. ...”

In reply to a further enquiry, Mr. Parkin sent me a sketch (fig. 37) of what he saw, remarking that it was a very rough one, and adding:

“The distance from where I stood would be from a mile to a mile and a half, so that the question of colour, shape of head and so forth could not be determined.”

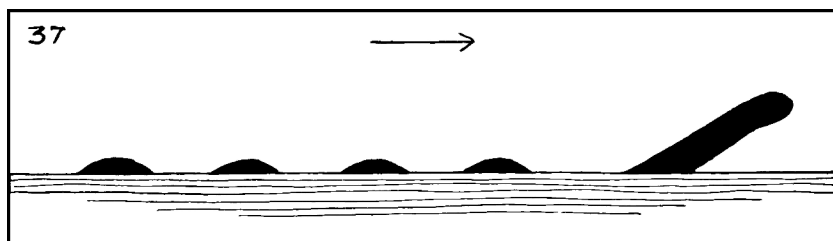


Fig. 37.—CREATURE SEEN BY MR. PARKIN.

## North Atlantic, 1915

The following account of a sea-monster sighted, during the War, by the German submarine U28 is taken from an article<sup>233</sup> by her commander, Korv.-Kapt. Frhr. v. Forstner, which appeared in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (19.xii.33). In the course of correspondence, Baron von Forstner indicated that he was sending me some further information, and a sketch—but neither, unfortunately, has yet come to hand.

<sup>233</sup> Entitled “The Scottish Sea Monster.”

“On the 30th July 1915 we sank the large British steamer *Iberian*, 5,223 tons ... off the west coast of France.

“The steamer sank very rapidly stern first, with her bow almost perpendicular in the air. Some little time—at least 25 seconds—after she had completely disappeared, a moderately-loud explosion took place under water. Immediately, some pieces of wreckage were thrown into the air—and among them, to our astonishment, was a gigantic marine animal, floundering and kicking.

“On the conning-tower with me, at the time, were the officer of the watch (Oberleut. Dieckmann), the chief engineer (Ziemer), another engineer officer (Romeiss), Coxswain Parisch and A. B. Bartels. We all shouted to each other at this unusual sight.

“The creature had a long, tapering head and a long body with two pairs of legs—these were broad, and provided with large webs. Its length may have been some 20 metres.<sup>234</sup> In shape, it was more like a crocodile than anything else.

“This ‘Deep-sea Crocodile,’ as we named it, which was flung some 20 or 30 metres into the air, disappeared under water again after some 20 or 30 seconds. ...”

Ten days later the *Bremer Nachrichten* published a short account of a similar creature seen in the North Sea, on July 28, 1918 (10 p.m.), by Korv.-Kapt. W. Lowisch, then serving in U108, and a member of the crew. By Capt. Lowisch’s account, the animal had “a longish head, jaws like a crocodile, and legs with indubitable feet.” Its length was estimated at about 30 metres (98.4 ft.).

## Off Thorpeness, Suffolk, 1931

In a letter appearing in the *Times* (12.xii.33) Mrs. S. M. Armstrong gave a short account of a creature seen by herself and two other witnesses off Thorpeness in June 1931. She has since kindly furnished me with fuller particulars, and a sketch (fig. 38).

She is not certain of the exact date. The sun was shining, and the sea very calm. The time was between 8 and 8:30 p.m. The creature was seen at a distance of about 400 yards to seaward, and swimming

<sup>234</sup> Roughly, 65½

parallel with a sand-bank in the vicinity. It was lying nearly flush with the water, generally exhibiting a blackish hump—assumed to be the head—at the leading end, and another a long distance in rear. Occasionally, other intermediate humps rose into sight, indicating that all were connected. When in this attitude the total length visible was, Mrs. Armstrong estimates, four or five times that of an ordinary rowing-boat at the same distance; and the head—which was observed to be rounded, and to move from side to side—looked about three times

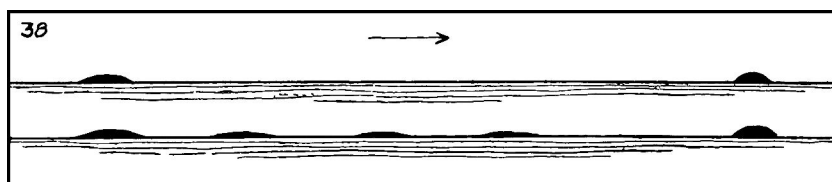


Fig. 38.—CREATURE SEEN BY MRS. ARMSTRONG.

as big as a bather's would have appeared. Mrs. Armstrong, and the other two observers,<sup>235</sup> were convinced that what they saw was one creature, and not several in line. It swam very fast, and, having cleared the sand-bank, headed seaward—causing, as it did so, a tremendous commotion by beating the water with what appeared to be a pair of large grey fins.<sup>236</sup> “If one had not known the length of body in the water behind, one would have thought it a colossal bird.”

### Kilbrannan Sound, Arran, 1931

The following account of a creature seen in 1931 on the west shore of Arran I., in the Firth of Clyde, was kindly communicated to me by Dr. John Paton, of Langside, Glasgow.

“On the 28th July, 1931, my daughter (aged 14) and myself were returning from a cycle ride. ... It had been a glorious, warm day with bright sunshine, and about seven o'clock in the evening we were cycling close to the sea, on the shore road, at an almost deserted part of the island between Imachar and Dougrie. The beach here is rocky. There was no one in sight, and everything was still.

<sup>235</sup> Her governess and her cook. There was no one else on the beach at this time.

<sup>236</sup> “The fins gave the impression of being gray—and certainly the rest of the monster looked black; but the sun was getting low.”

"I thought it rather strange, then, that I should see, a few hundred yards further on, what I was certain must be an upturned boat lying on a rock in the water a few yards from the beach. I determined to find out what boat it was, and report the matter if necessary. Immediately I came opposite to it, I dismounted and proceeded to make my investigation.

"I had not gone more than a few yards when, to my astonishment, a head turned and looked at me from that I had thought to be the bow of the boat. ... I waved my daughter's attention to the creature, and made an effort to get as close as possible. The legs or flippers could not be observed, and I wanted to be sure of just what kind of extremities it had. I was disappointed, as the movement evidently frightened it, and it wobbled off the rock into the sea. It made off at a good pace, and left a considerable wake behind it.

"The head was parrot-shaped—that is to say, that it had a kind of beak. It was of a rather light grey colour. The body was longer than that of a large elephant—of a similar colour, and just as shapeless.

"I was certain that the animal would be seen again by someone and reported, but this did not happen. I therefore reported it to the *Glasgow Herald* in August 1931, and much to my astonishment<sup>237</sup> the letter was not published."

Dr. Paton remarks, further on, that the (Antarctic) sea elephant is the only creature known to him which bears much resemblance to what he saw, and he also notes:

"I am of opinion that although the head was small, and close to the body when I saw it, it is probable that the creature would be able to extend the head considerably."

In a subsequent letter, he states:

<sup>237</sup> I remember reading of a young Scots barrister who once told the Court of Session that he was "much astonished" at a judgment they had just delivered. Dire consequences impended—but the situation was saved by the leader of the bar observing, with profound gravity and decorum: "My Lords, I beg you to reflect that my learned friend is young and inexperienced—had he practised before your Lordships for forty years, as I have done, he would not have expressed surprise at any decision of your Lordships."



“The head could be turned round so fully that there must have been rather a narrow neck between it and the huge body. ... I am familiar with seals, sharks, whales, etc., and what I saw was unique.”

### Chatham I., Strait of Juan de Fuca, 1932–33

Finally, I should like to give a short abstract of some information available in connection with a creature which has repeatedly been seen, during the past two years, in Canadian waters—off the Chatham Islands, Juan de Fuca Strait.

It is, perhaps, unfortunate that a local newspaper, the *Victoria Daily Times*, should have seen fit to bestow on the creature, which was first seen in Cadboro Bay, the hybrid name of “Cadborosaurus.” The best which can be said for it—and that is not much—is that it imposes less strain on the jaw than the local Chinook Indian name of “Hiachuckaluck.” However, the paper in question seems to have done good work by collecting evidence, and by refraining from treating the matter as a joke—which it assuredly is not.

I have a good many unconfirmed newspaper reports, but the evidence here given is rather more reliable in character. It consists of a statement by Mr. F. W. Kemp (an official of the Provincial Archives), and another by Major W. H. Langley, Victoria, who is Clerk of the British Columbia Legislature. The former appeared in the *Illustrated London News* (6.i.34), while I owe the latter to the kindness of Lieut.-Comdr. A. J. G. Langley, R.N. (of the Department of Scientific Research, Admiralty), who is Major Langley’s nephew.

Mr. Kemp’s sighting occurred in August 1932—but, fearing ridicule, he said little about it until after hearing an account of Major Langley’s similar experience. Both accounts, so far as I know, were first printed in the *Victoria Daily Times* (5.x.33).

#### (FROM MR. KEMP’S STATEMENT)

“On August 10, 1932, I was with my wife and son on Chatham Island in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.<sup>238</sup> My wife called my attention to a mysterious something coming through the channel between

Strong Tide Island and Chatham Island. Imagine my astonishment on observing a huge creature with head out of the water travelling about four miles an hour against the tide. Even at that speed a considerable wash was thrown on the rocks, which gave me the impression that it was more reptile than serpent to make so much displacement.

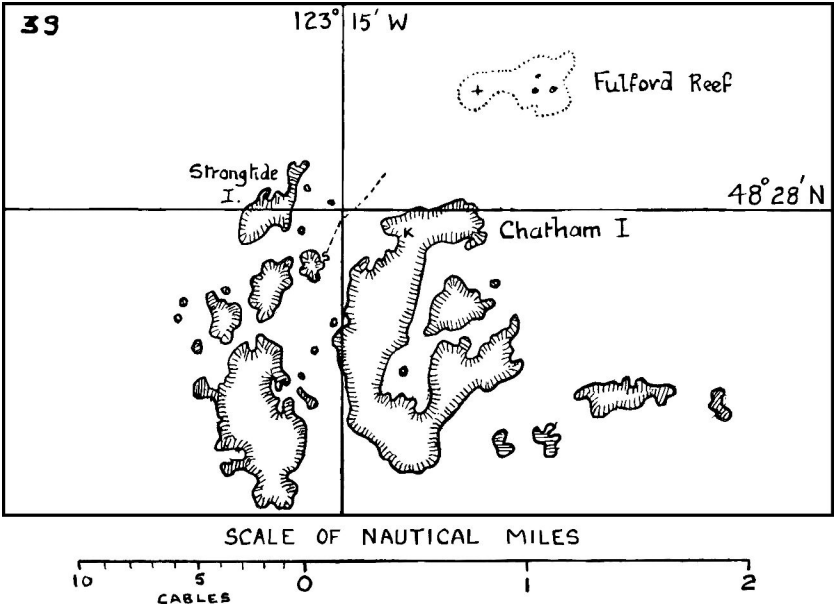


Fig. 39.—THE CHATHAM ISLANDS.

NOTE.—The letter K indicates Mr. Kemp's position, and the dotted line the track of the creature seen by him.

“The channel at this point is about 500 yards wide. Swimming to the steep rocks of the island opposite, the creature shot its head out of the water on to the rock, and, moving its head from side to side, appeared to be taking its bearings. Then fold after fold of its body came to the surface. Towards the tail it appeared serrated with something moving flail-like at the extreme end. The movements were like those of a crocodile. Around the head appeared a sort of mane, which drifted round the body like kelp.

<sup>238</sup> See fig. 39.

“The Thing’s presence seemed to change the whole landscape, which makes it difficult to describe my experiences. It did not seem to belong to the present scheme of things, but rather to the Long Ago when the world was young. The position it held on the rock was momentary. My wife and sixteen-year-old son ran to the point of land to get a clearer view. I think the sounds they made disturbed the animal. The sea being very calm, it seemed to slip back into deep water; there was a great commotion under the surface, and it disappeared like a flash.

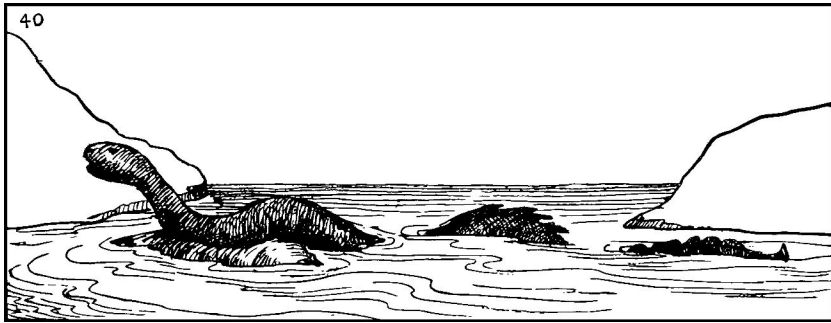


Fig. 40.—CREATURE SEEN BY MR. KEMP.

“... It would be terribly hard to photograph, as its movements are different from anything I have ever seen or heard of. I should say its length to be not less than 80 feet. There were some logs on Strong Tide Island which gave me a good idea as to the size of the monster as it passed them. I took a measurement of one the next day which was over 60 feet in length, and the creature overlapped it to a large extent at each end. I put a newspaper on the spot where it rested its head and took an observation from our previous point of vantage. The animal’s head was very much larger than the double sheet of newspaper.

“The body must have been at least 5 feet thick, and was of a bluish-green colour which shone in the sun—I could not determine the shape of the head, but it was much thicker than the body.”

Fig. 40 is redrawn from a sketch by Mr. Kemp which accompanied his statement. A note in connection with it remarks: “From the lifting movement when it pushed its head on the rock, it appeared to have either legs or flippers. Its movements were not fishlike.”

And here is Major Langley's account:

"On Sunday [October 1, 1933, R.T.G.] my wife and I went for a sail in the *Dorothy*<sup>239</sup> around Discovery and Chatham Islands. ... On entering the passage between the north end of Chatham Island and Fulford Reef ... the incident happened which for brevity's sake is set out in the following numbered paragraphs.

"1. The time was about 1:30 p.m.

"2. We were not talking, and we were proceeding quite slowly and silently when suddenly my attention was attracted by a very loud and remarkable noise, something between a grunt and a snort, accompanied by a huge hiss.

"3. I immediately looked ahead in the direction of the noise, at the same time shouting to my wife, and we both saw a huge object about 90 to 100 feet off, a little on the port bow and on the edge of the kelp just off the Chatham Island shore. It was only visible for a few seconds, but what both of us are absolutely agreed upon may be put down as follows:

"(a) It was every bit as big as the back of a large whale, but entirely different in many respects.

"(b) Its colour was of a greenish brown. I should say a sort of dark olive green. It had markings along the top and sides. They seemed to be of a serrated nature.

"4. Its colour was very distinct as the sun was shining brightly on its wetted surface, and it was such a short distance away that there could be no mistaking it.

"5. Just shortly after it went down a swirl appeared on the surface of the water ahead of the *Dorothy*.

"6. My wife saw it break water a very short time afterwards on the other side of Fulford Reef. The appearance was exactly similar, but it was much further away and had travelled fast.

"7. The only part of it that we saw was [the] huge dome of what appeared to be a portion of its back.

"I may add that I have been cruising about local waters for nearly forty years in my leisure time. I have seen dozens of black-fish<sup>240</sup> at various times and have also seen them out of the water. I was out whaling on the West Coast in 1911, when the boat I was in killed three whales—a hump-back, sulphur-bottom and fin-back—

and towed them alongside to the whaling-station at Sechart. Upon arrival at the station there was a sperm whale hauled out there.

“There was no similarity, except in size, between any of these and the creature we saw on Sunday. Nor, so far as I have been able to ascertain, does the appearance of any marine monster known to science correspond with it. A porpoise, of course, would look like a sprat in comparison.”

It will be noticed, however, that there is considerable similarity between the creature seen by Messrs. Kemp and Langley and those observed from the *Avalanche*.

<sup>239</sup> A 5-ton yacht, length 30 feet.

<sup>240</sup> Also called “pilot whales.” They grow to about 20 feet long.



## Three Carcasses

Unfortunately, not those of sea-serpents; at least, most probably not. But as all three presented various peculiar features, and were taken for the real thing by spectators who examined them closely, it seems worth while to put on record—if only as a warning—such information relating to them as I have managed to collect.

I devoted a chapter of my *Case for the Sea-Serpent* to the question, “What becomes of the Body?” and in it I did my best to expose the fallacy which underlies the reasoning of those who contend that sea-serpents cannot exist, because their remains have never been found.<sup>241</sup>



Fig. 41.—THE FLORIDA CARCASE.

I also gave details of various cases in which a stranded carcass, or a skeleton, had been wrongly identified—either honestly or fraudulently—as a sea-serpent; and I concluded by mentioning the carcass found in New River Inlet, Florida (1885—see fig. 41) as having, on the evidence, some claim to be regarded as a creature hitherto unknown to science. The final paragraph ran thus:

“I have notes of one or two similar cases—notably one of a creature washed ashore at Santa Cruz, California, in 1926,<sup>242</sup> ‘thirty-seven feet long, with a long thin neck and a huge distended head’—but not in sufficient detail to present them here. Broadly speaking, it may be said that with one doubtful exception—the Florida carcass—no remains of a definitely and unequivocally ‘sea-serpentine’ character have yet been found. But I suggest that, in view of what has been put forward earlier in this chapter, the chances against such remains being washed ashore are so great

<sup>241</sup> See also p. 136.

that it would be unreasonable, now or hereafter, to expect such an event.”

Until a few months ago, I was unaware of the fact that a carcass much resembling the Florida specimen had been washed ashore at Prah Sands (Cornwall) nearly two years before I wrote those lines; and another turned up near Cherbourg while I was sketching-out this chapter. I propose to give some details of these cases, and also of the Santa Cruz carcass. In passing, I may remark that they throw considerable light on the Florida case, and, in my judgment, relegate it to the same category—pseudo-sea-serpents—in which they fall to be included themselves.

### The Santa Cruz carcass, 1925

The casual reference to this carcass in the passage just quoted was based upon a short note in the *Wide World Magazine* for November, 1925, accompanying the two remarkable photographs reproduced as Plates III and IV.<sup>242</sup>

At first sight, it certainly appears that the creature shown in them is of a type quite unknown to present-day science. The neck, while of great length, is very much smaller than the head—and appears to be undamaged at its junction with the latter and for at least some distance farther away. And the discrepancy in bulk between the head and the body seems mainly due to extensive foreshortening, caused by the somewhat unfortunate selection of view-point. On the other hand, the head is “very like a whale”—but no known whale possesses so long and slender a neck.

The note accompanying the photographs was tantalisingly brief; but it added that Dr. David Starr Jordan (the well-known American zoologist—since dead) had given it as his opinion that the creature was a “bottle-nosed porpoise of a rare species.” As the length of the body was given as 37 feet, it was legitimate to suppose that Dr. Starr Jordan had been mis-reported, and that he had spoken of a bottle-nosed whale. But although my curiosity was whetted by the apparent

<sup>242</sup> This should have been 1925.

<sup>243</sup> It may be noted that Plate III was also reproduced in the *Times*, 9.xii.33.



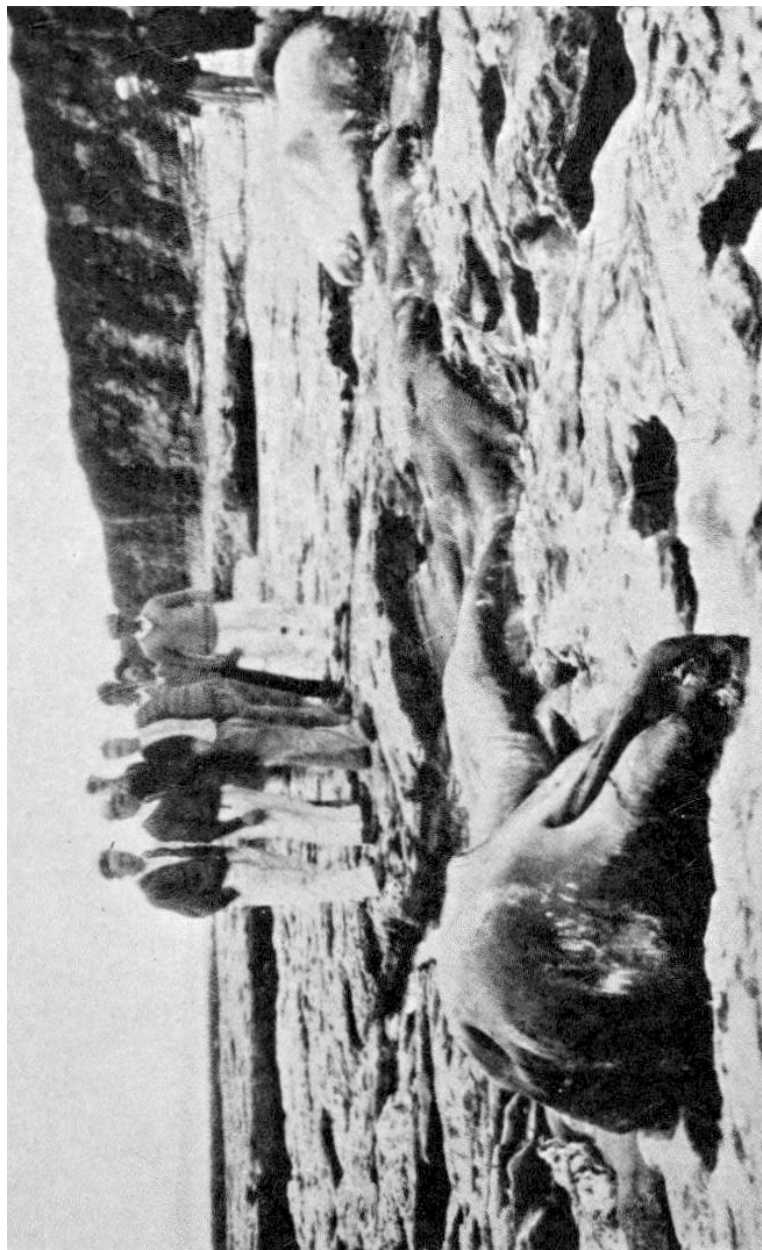


PLATE III.—THE SANTA CRUZ CARCASS.

[By courtesy of the *Wide World Magazine*.

discrepancy between the facts and their explanation I was unable, for some time, to obtain any information which threw further light on it.

Last autumn, however, I learned that a resident of Santa Cruz had addressed an enquiry on the subject to the Natural History Museum; and Dr. Calman courteously provided me with the results of a provisional investigation made in the Museum.

The enquiry gave the date of the stranding as May 1926,<sup>244</sup> and stated that the body appeared, when discovered, to be extensively decomposed. "A most peculiar looking creature—mouth like the bill of a duck, the eyes just the pimples you see on one side—long neck, yards long, big body and curly tail. ..." It mentioned that the creature had been identified "by some *savants*" as a bottle-nosed whale, and enquired whether the identification was correct.

The Museum replied that this was so; the animal appeared to be a very badly-decomposed specimen of *Hyperoodon* (the bottle-nosed whale), while the loose neck was probably a mass of viscera.

On the evidence of the head alone, this identification seemed unsailable—but I was not entirely satisfied as to the origin of the apparently-undecomposed portion of the neck; and at Dr. Calman's suggestion I communicated with Professor J. Grinnell, head of the Department of Vertebrate Zoology in the University of California. Meanwhile, Dr. Calman very kindly furnished me with the following written opinion, as the result of a close examination of the photographs made by himself and Mr. M. A. C. Hinton, the Deputy-keeper of Zoology.

"We think that the remains have suffered a good deal of manipulation, probably intentional. The skin appears to have been stripped from the carcase, and the latter, chopped into two pieces, is lying in front of the two figures at the right-hand side of the smaller photograph.<sup>245</sup> The skin—including the blubber—seems to have been drawn out and rolled, so as to give the appearance of a narrow neck. The appearance in the larger photograph<sup>246</sup> is to us quite conclusive of an artificial disposition of the remains."

<sup>244</sup> It was actually May 1925.

<sup>245</sup> Plate III.

<sup>246</sup> Plate IV.

Professor Grinnell's reply to my letter identified the creature with certainty, and indirectly showed that the views expressed above, as to the "faking" of the body prior to photographing it, were in all likelihood correct. I am much indebted to him for the information given below, which is quoted from the *American Journal of Mammalogy* (Vol. X, November 1929, pp. 356-8):

"On June 4, 1925, the newspapers of Santa Cruz and San Francisco, California, apprised the public of the occurrence of a sea-serpent, or other more or less fabled monster, in Californian waters. A few days prior to the appearance of the newspaper stories, the remains of a large marine animal had been washed ashore on the beach at Santa Cruz, California. Decomposition had set in, and close examination of the carcass was not lightly undertaken. Consequently, the tales were the results of distant and hasty examination. When the news of the presence of this creature reached Dr. Barton Warren Evermann, Director of the Museum of the California Academy of Sciences, he visited the spot and pronounced the 'sea-serpent' to be the eviscerated carcass of a beaked whale. More specific identification was impossible at the time, but arrangements were made to have the skull preserved and it is now incorporated in the collections of the California Academy of Sciences.

"Examination of the skull after its arrival at the Museum proved it to be that of the rare Baird's beaked whale (*Berardius bairdii*, Stejneger). ... Measurements taken in the flesh by Dr. Evermann showed that this individual was 36 feet 6 inches long."

*Berardius* is closely allied to *Hyperoodon*. The former is more common in the Pacific, the latter in the Atlantic.

### The Prah Sands carcass, 1928

Unlike the Santa Cruz carcass (and also that found at Querqueville, presently to be described) the Prah Sands creature was never examined by a competent zoologist—nor, apparently, are any relics of it available for examination. In consequence, its identification is somewhat problematical; but I hope to give ground for supposing it to have been a shark—most probably, a basking-shark.



PLATE IV.—HEAD OF THE SANTA CRUZ CARCASE.

[By courtesy of the *Wide World Magazine*.

Such, however, is by no means the impression to be derived from the first description of it which appeared in print—a letter addressed to the *Times* by Mr. E. J. Garmeson, Caterham. It was published on December 11, 1933.

“I saw the dead body of a very curious animal washed up on the shore at Praa<sup>247</sup> Sands in the spring of 1928. It had been killed by the storm which threw it up and the head had been torn off, but it must have been not unlike the Loch Ness ‘monster’ as described by Commander Gould. Several feet remained of the snake-like neck, and what remained of the body measured from neck to tail approximately 30 feet, while it was some 3 feet to 4 feet in diameter at the thickest part of the body barrel. There were four feet-like flippers for swimming and the tail tapered to a point. The colour was a dirty white with some traces of pink, the skin was coarse and covered in places with hair or bristles, while the bones, which were of considerable size, were more fish-like than animal. Unfortunately the position was such that it was impossible to get a satisfactory photograph, and the situation was too out of the way for any proper investigation to be made.”

I got into touch, as soon as possible, with Mr. Garmeson; and, through his good offices, with another eye-witness of the stranding—Major G. S. M. Hutchinson, Farnborough. Furthermore, Miss A. M. Hobson, of Praa Sands, furnished me with a copy of a photograph showing the carcase—and Mr. G. Langley, of H.M. Coastguard, whose wife had obtained this photograph, subsequently lent me the negative, as well as providing me with some additional information. Finally, Mr. Fraser, of the Natural History Museum, showed me the customary forms, relative to the stranding, which had been completed and sent in by the local coast-guards; and Dr. Calman subsequently sent me copies of them. To all of these helpers I tender my grateful thanks.

#### (COASTGUARD REPORTS)

I will begin with the coastguard reports. The Natural History Museum supplies printed skeleton forms to all coastguard stations, enabling

<sup>247</sup> *Sic.* Mr. Garmeson knows the locality well, and no doubt used the correct local spelling. I have followed that of the Admiralty chart.

particulars of all stranded whales, porpoises and dolphins to be preserved for record in the Museum. It may be noted that the first question on this form enquires "Is the tail horizontal?" and a note indicates that if the answer is in the negative<sup>248</sup> the remainder of the form need not be completed. In the Prah Sands case, two reports—preceded (as directed) by a telegram—were received from the local coastguard station at Prussia Cove.<sup>249</sup>

The telegram read, "Headless decomposed carcase of whale 21 feet Praa Sands Cornwall June 7th. Coastguard Prussia Cove." In reply, the Museum asked that a flipper might be detached and forwarded for inspection.

The first report (undated, but sent on June 8 or 9), confirmed the details given in the telegram, and stated that the tail was horizontal. The length from base of back-fin to middle of tail was given as 12 feet, and that of the flippers as 2 feet. The colour of the skin was described as white, and apparently "bleached through long immersion." The condition of the specimen was stated to be "very much mutilated and decomposed," and a note added that this would "necessitate its immediate burial."

On the night of June 9, a heavy gale turned the carcase completely over; and on June 11 the Prussia Cove station informed the Museum that, in consequence of this:

"... we discovered it had additional small fins underneath, and the tail which appeared to be horizontal when it was first reported was found to be vertical. We conclude, therefore, that it is a shark. ..."

In consequence, the flipper—being no longer required—was not forwarded.

<sup>248</sup> Indicating, of course, that the carcase is not that of a cetacean. At the same time, I think that the question is a little misleading. I can imagine a somewhat dense coastguard making it his practice, in every case, to reply "Yes"—on the ground that the tail-portion of the carcase, lying on a flat beach, must inevitably be horizontal.

<sup>249</sup> About a mile to the westward Prah Sands. The latter is approximately 50° 06' N., 5° 23' W., and is roughly equidistant from Marazion and Helston.

## (MR. G. LANGLEY)

Mr. Langley—who was Station Officer at Prussia Cove at the time, and now holds the same post at Southbourne, Bournemouth—was unfortunately absent on leave at the time of the stranding, and never saw the carcass; but some particulars which he obtained on his return are subjoined.

“The length of the carcass was about twenty feet, and headless. I think it was described accurately to me as having the appearance of having been slashed off by a propeller and subsequently buffeted in the breakers. The backbone naturally standing the buffeting best, and the soft part giving way, probably gave the impression of a neck. No account that I had gave the neck and skin as whole.

“My wife described the skin as resembling a very coarse pig, dirty yellow in colour ... but did not notice any hair. This fact she admits she never looked for—so, if the hair was sparse, it would have escaped her notice.

“The photograph was taken when decomposition had started. ... The maximum diameter was described as 2 feet, allowing for flattening as it rested.”

## (MR. E. J. GARMESON)

Mr. Garmeson's letter, already quoted, gives a general description of the creature as he saw it. In conversation with me, he gave further details, of which I took notes.<sup>250</sup>

The carcass was washed ashore not more than 200 yards from the bungalow he then occupied. He saw it two or three times a day for two or three days. When he first saw it, it was practically fresh.

It had a barrel-shaped body, gradually tapering down to a point. There was a quite definite neck, considerably smaller than the body and coming out of it at an angle—much as a horse's neck joins on to its body. The head appeared to have been torn off. The “chest” of the body was badly torn, showing a number of bones within. The creature possessed a pair of very large flippers, almost like rudimentary arms, which appeared to be jointed, like an elbow, half-way along their

<sup>250</sup> As in the case of the Loch Ness witnesses, I sent transcripts of my notes to Mr. Garmeson, and to Major Hutchinson, for checking.

length. There were also, he thought, another pair of flippers towards the rear, but these were much smaller.

The neck—what was left of it—he considered to have been about 2-2½ feet long, and some 6 inches in diameter. It had a continuous skin round it. He did not observe any vertebræ at the torn end.

There was a certain amount of coarse hair or bristles, lightish in colour, in patches on the body (he was not sure whether there was any on neck or tail). The texture of the skin resembled that of a pig, and the bristles were also pig-like. The colour of the body was a dirty pinkish-white, tending more to white than pink.

There were no traces of any flukes whatever on the tail, and no dorsal fin. To the best of his recollection, the length from the “chest” to the tail-tip would be about 24 feet. The body was 4 feet, or less, in diameter vertically, and about 3 feet or less horizontally. It tapered slowly towards the rear until about half-way between chest and tail-tip, and then more rapidly. Fig. 42, *a* and *b*, shows two rough sketches of it, made under his direction.

(MAJOR G. S. M. HUTCHINSON)

Major Hutchinson, like Mr. Garmeson (whom he did not meet) saw the carcass on several occasions. He was also present when it was cut up and buried.<sup>251</sup>

When he first saw it, it was lying on its side, and “curled up.” It was straightened out later, and he then estimated its length at rather more than 20 feet. The maximum girth of the body was about that of a pony—not so great as that of a horse. The neck was like a giraffe’s and tapering. The head end was jagged. He saw no dorsal fin, and no flukes on the tail.

The body was much larger in diameter than either neck or tail. At the hinder part of the body were two fins or flippers—there might have been similar flippers at the fore end of the body, but he was not certain of this. Those which he saw were 1½-2 feet long, and at the outer end were what appeared to be bristles.

All over the body, sparsely, were thick, coarse blackish hairs, about 5 inches long. In between the hairs, whose roots might be ¾ inch apart or so, the skin—light brown in colour—could be seen. This skin was

<sup>251</sup> After an unsuccessful attempt to burn it.



not decomposed. He did not remember whether there was hair on the neck or the tail.

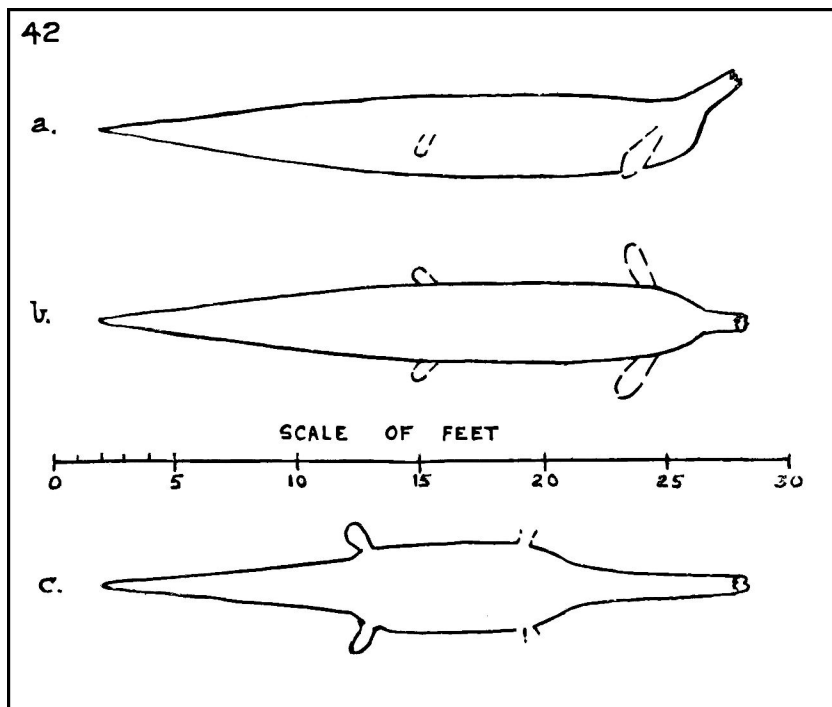


Fig. 42.—THE PRAH SANDS CARCASS.

(a, b, by Mr. Garmeson's recollection. c, by Major Hutchinson's recollection.)

When cutting-up the carcass, he noticed that the vertebræ—which were roughly cylindrical, and about 4 inches in diameter—were cupped, or socketed, and appeared to be full of oil.

Fig. 42, c, which I drew under his direction, represents roughly his recollection of what the carcass looked like.

#### (EVIDENCE OF THE PHOTOGRAPH)

And now for the last—and, as I regard it, the best—item of evidence: Mrs. Langley's photograph<sup>252</sup> (Plate V).

<sup>252</sup> A sepia-print of this, lent me by Miss Hobson, was somewhat faded, and suggested under-exposure. Messrs. Baker, of Holborn, re-photographed it for me, taking special precautions, and obtained a new negative which, in my judgment, compares favourably with the original—afterwards lent me by Mr. Langley. The plate is from Messrs. Baker's version.

The mutilated state of the body is evident. To my mind, the photograph bears out Mr. Langley's view that it had probably been slashed by a ship's propeller. The impact seems to have occurred just in front of the fin on the left of the photograph, at which point the body was cut partly through, forming the torn "chest" described by Mr. Garmeson. There are also indications of a second cut, nearer the head.

A leading feature of the photograph is the round disc in the foreground, which is obviously one of the vertebræ described by Major Hutchinson. And it corresponds exactly with what one would expect to see if the body were that of a basking-shark.

Readers of my former book will remember the account there given of a very similar case—the famous "Animal of Stronsa."<sup>253</sup> This carcass, stranded on Stronsa in 1808 (already much decomposed), and never examined by a competent zoologist, was long believed to have been that of a sea-serpent. A concise description of it, compiled from four independent affidavits, would have run somewhat as follows:

"Length, about fifty-five feet. Maximum girth, about twelve feet. Neck, slender, and about fifteen feet long. Tail, the same. Head, small, not exceeding a foot in length and six inches in width. A bristly mane, extending from the shoulders to nearly the tip of the tail. Skin, smooth and grey. Organs of motion, three pairs of fins, one of which may have been a caudal fin."

Yet there is no doubt at all that—as Sir Everard Home, much to the annoyance of certain Scottish naturalists, pointed out<sup>254</sup> so long ago as 1809—this plesiosaurus-like creature was, in reality, a huge basking-shark. Three of its vertebræ are preserved in the Royal Scottish Museum<sup>255</sup>—and these alone afford quite conclusive evidence on the point. In addition, admirable engravings of the skull and sternum (both, unfortunately, since lost) may be found in a contemporary monograph<sup>256</sup>—and these, also, leave no doubt as to the creature's identity.

<sup>253</sup> Orkney Islands.

<sup>254</sup> "An Anatomical Account of the *Squalus maximus* ..." (*Philosophical Transactions* (1809), pp. 206–20).

<sup>255</sup> Where I saw them in November last.

<sup>256</sup> *Memoirs of the Wernerian Natural History Society*, Vol. 1 (1808–10) (Edinburgh, 1811, pp. 431–41).

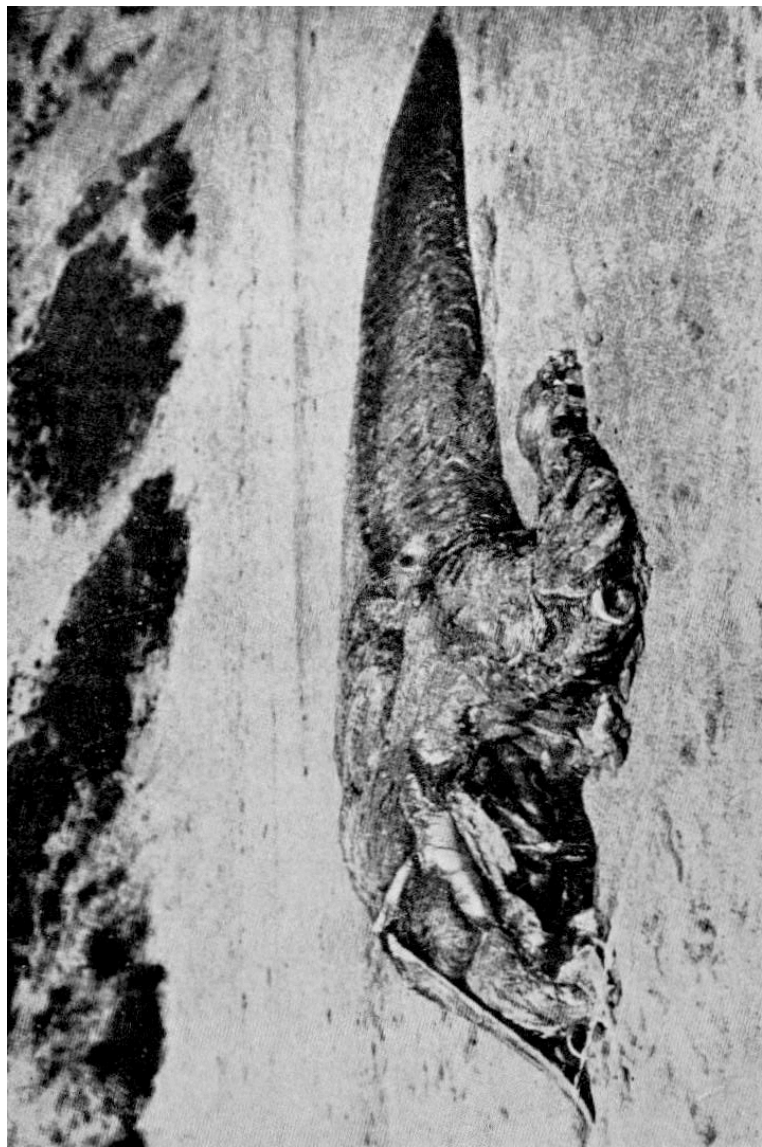


PLATE V.—THE PRAH SANDS CARCASE.

[From a photograph by Mrs. G. Langley.

It is difficult, at first sight, to understand how a bulky creature like a basking-shark could ever present the appearance of having a long, slender neck. But when its carcase has become more or less decomposed this occurrence is not only possible, but almost inevitable. Although attaining a great size, the basking-shark, in common with other cartilaginous fishes, has—for a vertebrate—the absolute minimum of bone. Its skeleton consists entirely of a long tapering back-bone, composed of cylindrical socketed vertebræ, running from the small skull to the upper lobe of the tail fin. Apart from this, and from two large cartilaginous gill-frames (branchia) unconnected with the backbone, it is merely a mass of flesh and gristle.

One can easily see that, when such a carcase is partly decayed, the flesh and skin adhering to the backbone would naturally produce—without any such “faking” as the Santa Cruz carcase probably underwent—the impression of a long, slender neck and tail. In particular, the falling away of the gill-frames, with their large adherent mass of flesh, would leave behind a slender “neck” connecting a (much-diminished) “head” with a body possessing an apparently well-marked pair of “shoulders.”

And that the Prah Sands carcase was at least partly decomposed when it came ashore, I have little doubt. Admittedly, Mr. Garmeson states that it seemed “practically fresh” when he first saw it. On the other hand, Major Hutchinson, while not quite certain whether it was noisome then, is positive that it proved so very soon afterwards. And if it were almost fresh on June 7, when the coastguards at Prussia Cove reported its arrival, they need hardly have urged, in their report of the following day, that its advanced state of decomposition necessitated its immediate burial.

Consequently, I consider that, in all likelihood, the Prah Sands carcase was that of a shark—most probably, a basking-shark—and that the apparent “neck” was the product of partial decomposition or mutilation, or both jointly. This opinion, I hasten to add, is not merely my own—it is also that of the South Kensington authorities; and of Dr. Oudemans, to whom I sent a copy of the photograph.

On the other hand, I admit that there are certain features of the evidence which do not fit this theory. If the apparent “hairs” on the

carcase were real hairs,<sup>257</sup> and evenly distributed all over it, the creature could not have been a shark—it must have been a mammal. But in that event it could not have been a cetacean, for none of these has external hair<sup>258</sup> it must have been a pinniped—a member of the seal family. Its size, however, rules out all of these except the sea-elephant, whose presence in the English Channel is unlikely, since it has only been met with, hitherto, in the Antarctic regions; and no pinniped has vertebræ at all resembling those of a shark.<sup>259</sup>

Another curious point of the evidence is the reported absence of any flukes on the tail; at least, neither Mr. Garmeson nor Major Hutchinson saw anything of the kind, although the coastguards seem to have done so. Here again, however, it must be remembered that we are dealing with a decomposed and mutilated specimen.

It would be possible to obtain conclusive evidence, for purposes of identification, by exhuming what remains of the body. It was buried not far from where it came ashore; and Major Hutchinson tells me that he is confident of being able to find the spot again. He kept part of one “flipper,” and a specimen vertebra, as relics; but, most regrettably, these have since been lost.<sup>260</sup>

Such is an outline of the Prah Sands case—one which, to my mind, reproduces with amazing fidelity all the leading features of its Stronsa prototype.

### The Querqueville carcase (1934)

On the afternoon of February 28, 1934, another very similar carcase was found by some fishermen on the shore at Querqueville, about 2 miles westward from Cherbourg. Such occurrences are usually thought to possess some slight “news-value”; but in the present instance this was enhanced by the widespread interest already attaching

<sup>257</sup> See, on this point, the account of the Querqueville carcase, which follows.

<sup>258</sup> Most species, however, have a few fine bristles near the mouth—but not elsewhere.

<sup>259</sup> It is, perhaps, significant that Dr. Oudemans, who regards the “sea-serpent” as belonging to the pinnipeds, does not consider the Prah Sands carcase to be one of them.

<sup>260</sup> I understand that a local resident also removed some portions, and afterwards buried them in the grounds. I have failed to obtain further news of them.

to the Loch Ness “monster.” In consequence, the case received a good deal of attention from the Press.

The first report in the *Times* (1.iii.34) may be taken as a starting-point.

### A MARINE MONSTER FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHERBOURG, Feb. 28.

“A marine monster, 25 ft. long, has been cast ashore on the rocks at Querqueville. Its carcass, 5 ft. thick, bears a thin neck 3 ft. long, with a head resembling that of a camel. The beast has two large lateral fins, a dorsal fin, and a tail. Its body is covered with white hair, like thick horse-hair. Unfortunately, the carcass has been much damaged by boys and the sea-birds are preying on it.”

Similar accounts appeared in many other papers—those supplied by Reuter adding that the creature was believed to be a cetacean, while those issuing from the British United Press contained the following somewhat surprising statement:

“Experts from the French Natural History Museum who have examined the sea animal ... say it is a sea-cow.”<sup>261</sup>

Unfortunately, later accounts showed that the carcass was far advanced in decomposition. Furthermore, it had stranded some distance below high-water mark, and was, in consequence, frequently washed over; and although a wall of rocks was built round it this did not prevent its rapid disintegration. An account in *La Croix* (Paris), March 3, gives a good idea of its state after three days on shore:

“The carcass of the strange creature recently discovered on the beach at Querqueville, whose body is already much decomposed, exhibits four fins, which possess the peculiarity of being hairy.<sup>262</sup> The monster’s skin is also covered with hairs, which are mingled with its fatty substance. The head, which has been much knocked

<sup>261</sup> The living sea-cows—the manatee and the dugong—do not, so far as is known, exceed 12 feet in length. There is a 20-foot skeleton of a much larger species—Steller’s Sea-cow, *Rhytina gigas*—at South Kensington; but this species has been extinct since about 1790.

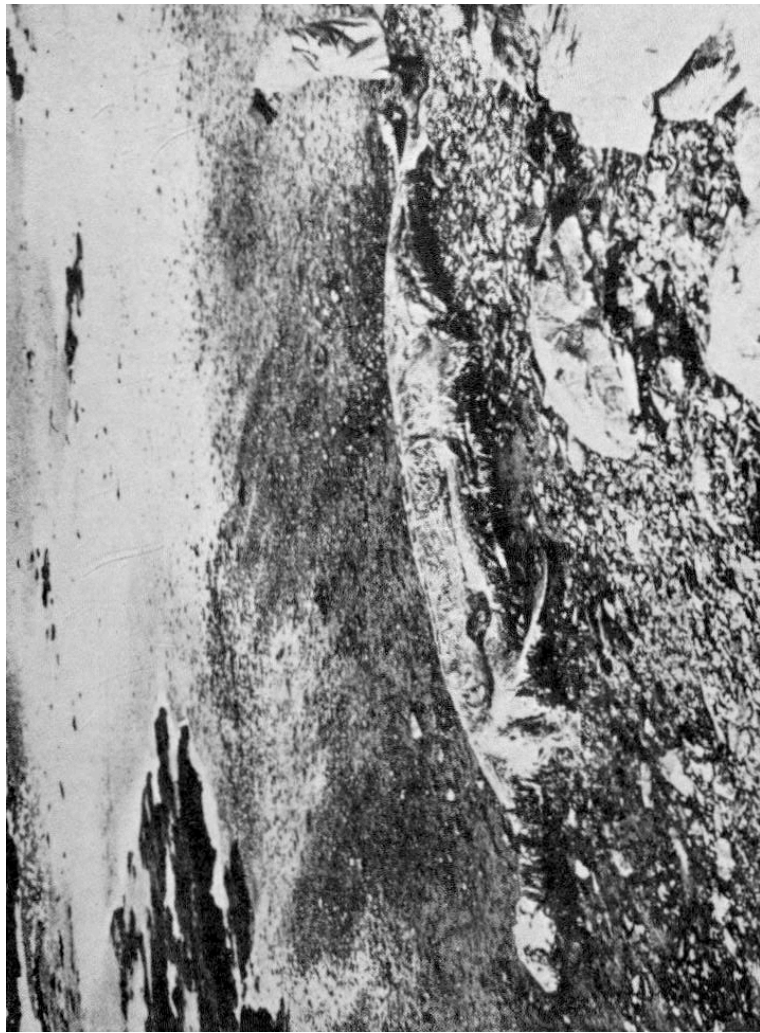


PLATE VI. — THE QUERQUEVILLE CARCASE.

[*Wide World Photos.*]

about during the periods when the carcase is under water, has in great measure disappeared. However, the cartilages forming the palate of this enormous cetacean are still discernible.

“At about 50 metres distance from the carcase are the giant animal’s lungs,<sup>263</sup> peritoneum and kidneys.

“A remarkable feature is, that the skeleton is composed of cartilaginous material exclusively, and not of bone. It is supposed that the animal has been struck, mutilated, and killed by some vessel, and that its inert mass has subsequently drifted ashore at Querqueville. ...”

Some excellent photographs of the carcase were secured, and one of these (Plate VI) was reproduced in *The Daily Mail*, 2.iii.34. As indicating, however, the difficulty of making a conclusive identification, it may be noted that the photograph was submitted to three British zoologists, who respectively suggested that the creature was a small whale, a large seal and a basking-shark!<sup>264</sup>

Plate VII, to my mind, clearly indicates the real nature of the “thin neck 3 feet long”; and before learning (from *La Croix*) that the creature’s skeleton was cartilaginous—and therefore could not be, as stated in the same breath, that of a cetacean—I was more or less certain that here, once more, was “The Animal of Stronsa.”

So it proved. Learning that Dr. Georges Petit, of the Paris Museum of Natural History, had made a detailed examination of the carcase,<sup>265</sup> I communicated with him, giving some details of the Santa Cruz and Prah Sands cases, and enquiring whether he considered the

<sup>262</sup> This appearance was due to the fibres, forming the margins of the fins, being exposed as the result of decomposition. A similar appearance was noted in the Stronsa case and (by Major Hutchinson) at Prah Sands. The alleged hairs on the body are more difficult to explain—but I should judge that this appearance, too, was the result of putrefaction.

<sup>263</sup> I.e., something which was taken for them, on the supposition that the creature was an “enormous cetacean.” It may have been the swimming bladder.

<sup>264</sup> Dr. Burgess Barnett (whale), Mr. M. A. C. Hinton (seal) and Dr. W. T. Calman (shark). Their views appeared, in consecutive paragraphs, in the issue of the *Daily Mail* containing the photograph.

<sup>265</sup> On March 3, 1934. He removed various portions of the carcase for further examination; and the residue, which had been temporarily secured with ropes, was then abandoned to the tides.



Querqueville carcase to be of similar type. Here is an extract (translated) from his reply:

“I can well understand that the animal washed ashore at Querqueville has aroused widespread interest; and I can personally testify that its aspect is most arresting, since it exhibits a relatively small head and—apparently—a long neck. I say ‘apparently,’ for I was at no loss to interpret this aspect; as you have pointed out ... in connection with the Stronsa (1808) and New River (1885) carcasses, this appearance of a neck was due to the disappearance of the lower jaw and the branchial apparatus. The pectoral fins, no longer sustained on the side towards the head, had been partially torn away and thrown rearward—and through the wide aperture thus created, the animal’s bowels had issued. In spite of the absence of the teeth, and skin-spicules, and the lack of comparable data in our Museum, I consider that the Querqueville animal is a ‘basking shark’—that is to say, *Cetorhinus maximus*. The information which I possess upon this subject enables me to affirm that, quite often, carcasses of this shark present a similar appearance, and that this is by no means the first occasion upon which they have been spoken of as long-necked animals.

“While on the beach at Querqueville, I received an interesting testimony—undoubtedly, that to which you refer at the end of your letter. The skipper of tug No. 117 declared to me that on January 25 or 26, he encountered, some distance to seaward of the Querqueville breakwater,<sup>266</sup> a large sea-creature moving with considerable speed. I took note of this declaration; for the condition of the carcase—which was more mutilated than decomposed—led me to consider that it might well be the same creature which he saw. The skipper had seen the head, which seemed to him much like a horse’s head, suddenly emerge from the water. I enquired whether he had observed the dorsal fin—he replied that he had not. Further questioned, he stated that when the animal reappeared, at a distance of 150 metres, he was able, on this occasion, to see its neck, ‘resembling that of a camel.’

“I pass on this information to you. But, if you want my personal opinion, it is that the circumstances of the second sighting have not been quite accurately reported. It seems likely that the skipper

saw the head—the front portion of the head—and mistakenly concluded that it was carried upon a long neck.”

The tug-master’s story had already been given to the Press, and I was anxious to have Dr. Petit’s opinion of it. If the fact could have been definitely established that the same, or apparently the same, creature was seen alive, and swimming freely, a few weeks earlier—and that in such circumstances it exhibited the same long, slender neck which its carcase appeared to possess—the theory that this neck was merely the result of partial decomposition would, of course, have had to be immediately abandoned, and we should be compelled to conclude that the Querqueville creature, although probably a shark of some kind, was at least of a type hitherto unknown.

In fact, both in this case and in those of Prah Sands and Florida carcasses,<sup>267</sup> we have two alternatives open to us. We may, if we choose, consider that they afford evidence of the existence of some large unknown sea-creature, allied to the sharks, but possessing a long, slender neck; and we may, in this case, adduce the observations made from tug No. 117 as confirmatory evidence. Or, if we prefer an explanation which involves fewer assumptions, and which most certainly covers the best-known case of the kind—the Stronsa carcase—we may hold it a proven fact that, in all three cases, what was actually examined was the partially decomposed body of a basking-shark, and that the apparent “long, slender neck” was, as already explained, the backbone in rear of the head, and the flesh and skin which still adhered to this after the gill-cartilages, and the flesh in which they were embedded, had become detached. In my judgment the latter is the correct view.

It seems likely, therefore, that there is no stranded carcase on record of which it can be said that a good case may be made out for suggesting that it is that of a “sea-serpent.” But if the enquiry points to this conclusion, it also indicates another. Beyond any question, it shows that the identification of a stranded and putrefied carcase is

<sup>266</sup> The westernmost of the three which protect Cherbourg harbour.

<sup>267</sup> I omit any mention, in this connection, of the Santa Cruz carcase—for that case stands on quite a different footing. Its identification is as certain—on the evidence afforded by its skull—as anything of the kind can well be; and in consequence no reasonable doubt remains that its remains were deliberately “manipulated” before being photographed.



PLATE VII. — "NECK" OF THE QUERQUEVILLE CARCASE.

[*Wide World Photos.*]

far from easy, even when those who examine it (or photographs of it) are competent zoologists; while the events at Prah Sands give some ground for thinking that at least a proportion of stranded carcasses may only receive, from those charged with reporting them, a somewhat cursory examination. And, to my mind, the conclusion put forward at the beginning of this chapter remains unaffected—that, in the case of the sea-serpent, the chances against its remains being washed ashore are so great that it would be unreasonable, now or hereafter, to expect such an event.

This section contains short notes of the principal features in five leading “sea-serpent” cases. They have been selected, from those given in my *Case for the Sea-Serpent*, as affording, in various details, a close parallel with the Loch Ness reports.

### The New England sea-serpent, 1817-19

This creature was seen by many witnesses in or near the harbour of Gloucester, Mass., on a number of occasions between August 6 and August 23, 1817. The same, or a very similar creature, was twice seen in Long Island Sound on October 3 and 5, 1817. Two years later (August 1819) it was repeatedly sighted off Nahant, and subsequently in Gloucester harbour itself.

It was observed by many persons simultaneously, for periods ranging from a few minutes to two hours and upwards, and at distances varying from a few feet to a mile.

It was seen at all times of the day, sometimes in rapid motion, sometimes at rest. When moving, it appeared to curve its back in vertical undulations; when at rest, its back seemed at times to be undulating, and at others smooth. It presented the appearance of an enormous serpent, black or dark-brown in colour, its body (so far as this could be seen) having a diameter of something under 3 feet, tapering slightly towards the extremities. Its length was variously assessed at from 70 to 120 feet. Its skin appeared smooth to most of the witnesses, but rough to two.

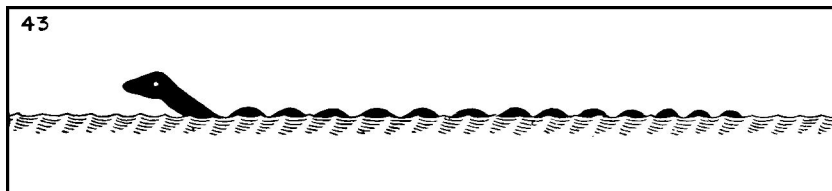


Fig. 43.—THE NEW ENGLAND SEA-SERPENT.

The head was generally described as resembling a serpent's. No legs, gills, fins or mane were observed. There was great unanimity of opinion as to the creature's great lateral flexibility. On two occasions it was seen, or believed to have been seen, lying partly on the shore and partly in the water. It was not heard to emit any sounds.

A committee appointed by the Linnean Society of Boston took evidence, in the form of sworn depositions, from twelve witnesses, and published this evidence in 1817.<sup>268</sup>

A contemporary sketch (by Marshal Prince), which appeared in the *Boston Weekly Messenger* (26.viii.1819), was commended by the Rev. C. Felch—who watched the creature for half an hour at from 20 to 40 yards range—as being a very correct likeness. This is reproduced in fig. 43.

## The Loch Hourn creature

This was repeatedly seen, on August 20 and 21, 1872, by a party of six persons<sup>269</sup> on board the cutter *Leda*, in Loch Hourn—an arm of the sea opening out of the Sound of Sleat, on the W. coast of Scotland. The observing conditions were good—the sun shining brightly, and the sea perfectly calm.

On several occasions the creature was watched for some minutes, both with the naked eye and with telescopes, while lying quietly on the surface at between 100 and 200 yards range. At other times, it was seen at some distance off, moving rapidly.

Its appearance was that of a line of black humps—sometimes three or four only, long and flat; at other times seven or eight, smaller and more rounded. The observers had no doubt that all the humps formed part of one body. The head and neck were occasionally seen slightly elevated above the surface—at other times, they formed a hump rather smaller and flatter than the rest. The total length visible was estimated at 45 feet (in the “8-hump” aspect), and 60 feet (in the “4-hump”).

When moving at speed, only the creature's head was visible, followed by a large and wide wash.

<sup>268</sup> *Report ... Relative to a Large Marine Animal ... seen near Cape Ann, Massachusetts* (Boston, 1817).

<sup>269</sup> Rev. J. Macrae, Rev. D. Twopeny, Miss F. Macrae, Miss K. Macrae, Mr. G. Bogle and a ghillie.

Through the kindness of Dr. A. C. Oudemans, I am enabled to reproduce (fig. 44) two drawings of the Loch Hourn creature which have not, so far as I know, been published elsewhere. They were made by Mr. G. Bogle, one of the eye-witnesses.

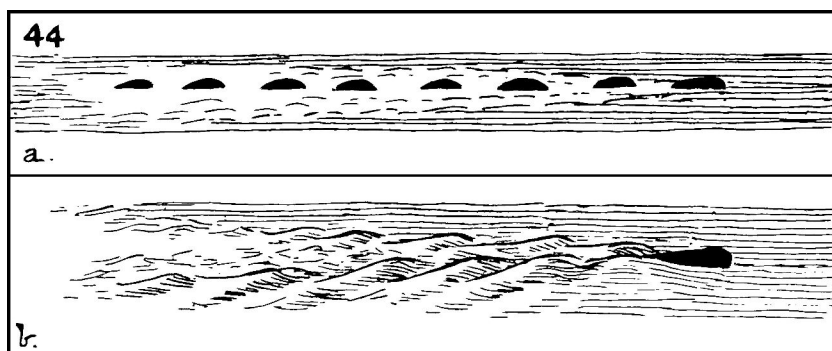


Fig. 44.—THE LOCH HOURN CREATURE.

(Moving from left to right: *a.* slowly, and *b.* at speed.)

[The Dingwall *North Star* (23.xii.33), contains an account of a creature seen in Loch Hourn, ten years later, by Mr. M. Stewart, Kyle of Loch Alsh. By his account, however, it may have been a whale “breaching”.]

### Creature seen in the Kyle of Loch Alsh, 1893

This was observed in September of that year by the late Dr. Farquhar Matheson and his wife, who were sailing on Loch Alsh (which divides the N. end of Skye from the mainland) in a small boat. The weather was fine, the sun shining brightly and the atmosphere very clear. The time was between 1 and 2 p.m.

The following extracts are from Dr. Matheson’s account<sup>270</sup>:

“I saw something rise out of the Loch in front of us—a long, straight neck-like thing as tall as my mast. ... It was then 200 yards away, and was moving towards us.

“Then it began to draw its neck down, and I saw clearly that it was a large sea-monster—of the saurian type, I should think. It

<sup>270</sup> This originally appeared in the *Strand Magazine*, August 1895. Dr. Matheson’s son, Dr. F. M. Matheson, supplied me with some additional information.

was brown in colour, shining, and with a sort of ruffle at the junction of its head and neck. ... It moved its head from side to side, and I saw the reflection of the light from its wet skin."

[The creature had no visible scales, its skin appearing perfectly smooth. It was in sight for about two minutes, and then sank—subsequently appearing three times more, at intervals of two or three minutes. As it had done originally, it raised its head and neck perpendicularly out of the water, and appeared to be looking round.]

"When it appeared the second time, it was going from us, and was travelling at a great rate. ... I was interested, and followed it. From its first to its last appearance we travelled a mile, and the last time we saw it it was about a mile away. ...

"I saw no body—only a ripple of water where the line of the body should be. I should judge, however, that there must have been a large base of body to support such a neck. It was ... of the nature of a gigantic lizard, I should think. An eel could not lift up its body like that. ..."

### Creature seen from s.s. "Umfuli," 1893

On December 4, 1893, about 5:30 p.m., the *Umfuli*, steaming southward at about 10½ knots on her way to the Cape, was in approximately lat. 21° 40' S., long. 17° 30' W.<sup>271</sup> The sun was shining, and the sea absolutely calm, without a ruffle or a catspaw on it.

On the starboard side of the ship, and about 400 yards away, there rose into sight a large creature with a serpentine head and neck, moving rapidly on an opposite course to the *Umfuli*'s. Its general appearance is shown in fig. 45, which is from a sketch by her commander, Captain R. J. Cringle. The body, which exhibited three distinct humps, is described as looking like a hundred-ton gun partly submerged.

<sup>271</sup> About 30 miles 264° from C. Corveiro, and roughly on the 100-fathom line.



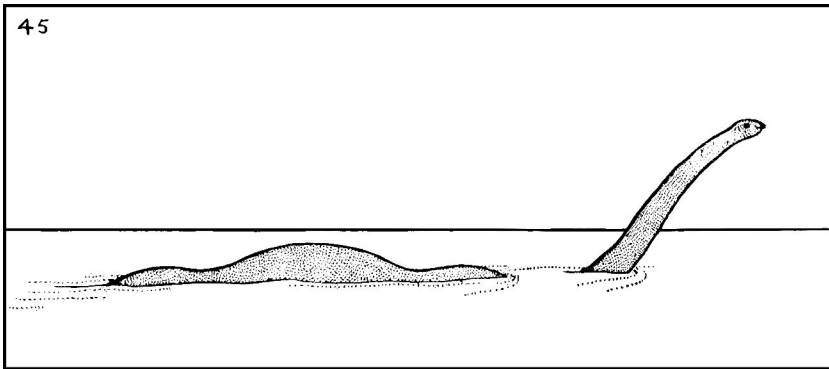


Fig. 45.—THE “UMFULI’S” SEA-SERPENT.

Captain Cringle (whom I interviewed some years ago) remarks<sup>272</sup>:

“It was rushing through the water at great speed, and was throwing water from its breast as a vessel throws water from her bows. I saw full 15 ft. of its head and neck on three several occasions. ... The body was all the time visible. ... The base, or body, from which the neck sprang, was much thicker than the neck itself, and I should not, therefore, call it a serpent. Had it been breezy enough to ruffle the water, or hazy, I should have had some doubt about the creature; but the sea being so perfectly smooth, I had not the slightest doubt in my mind as to its being a sea-monster.

“I turned the ship round to get closer to it, and got much nearer than we were at first; but the sun was then setting and the light gone, so that to have run the ship further off her course would have been folly ... this thing, whatever it was, was in sight for over half an hour. In fact, we did not lose sight of it until darkness came on.”

In a letter to me, Captain Cringle remarks:

“... I am certainly convinced that what I saw was a living creature capable of moving at the rate of ten knots. I chased it for twenty minutes at that speed. ...”

The creature appeared to have a smooth skin, dark brown in colour. It dipped its head under water several times, sending the spray flying

<sup>272</sup> In his original account (*Strand Magazine*, August 1895). I have several newspaper reports of the sighting, containing further details—but their value as evidence is not so great.

in all directions. Captain Cringle could see its eyes—and the jaws, which occasionally opened, appeared to be toothed.

The occurrence was witnessed by several of the *Umfuli*'s crew and passengers,<sup>273</sup> and was duly entered in the ship's log.<sup>274</sup>

### Creature seen from the yacht "Valhalla," 1905

On December 7, 1905 the (late) Earl of Crawford's yacht *Valhalla*, in the course of a cruise devoted to scientific research, was off Parahiba<sup>275</sup> (Brazil), under sail, and making for Bahia. At 10:15 a.m. two members of the party—Mr. M. J. Nicoll, F.Z.S., and Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo, F.Z.S.<sup>276</sup>—saw from the poop a large fin or frill, dark brown in colour and crinkled at the edge, projecting from the water. It appeared to be some 6 feet long, and rising 1½–2 feet above the surface. It was then about 100 yards off.

While Mr. Meade-Waldo was examining it with binoculars a great head and neck rose out of the water some distance in front of the frill, a slight water-space being left between them. The neck was some 7 or 8 feet long, and "as thick as a slight man's body." The head was hardly larger than the neck, and resembled that of a turtle.

Mr. Nicoll noted indications of a frill at the back of the head. The neck—whose underside was a dirty white—moved from side to side in a peculiar manner, lashing the sea into foam. Under water, behind the neck, a good-sized body could be seen. Observation was continued until the creature had dropped so far astern that nothing further could be made out. It was considered impracticable to put the vessel about quickly enough to keep within close view of the creature.

A report of the sighting is given in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society* (1906), and other sources will be found noted in my former book. I have little to add to what is given there, except that Mr. Nicoll stated, in a letter to Dr. Oudemans, that he was convinced that the creature possessed paddles or "flippers."

<sup>273</sup> One passenger—a Mr. Okell, of Durban—had a camera on board, but was so excited that he forgot all about it.

<sup>274</sup> The entry is reproduced in *The Case for the Sea-Serpent*, p. 192.

<sup>275</sup> At the time of the sightings, she was in approximately lat. 7° 14' S., long. 34° 25' W. —23 miles 106° from C. Branco and just outside the 100-fathom line.

<sup>276</sup> Mr. Nicoll died in 1925, and Mr. Meade-Waldo in February of this year.