

direction, that, during these epochs of disturbance, neither the earth nor the atmosphere could be fitted for the residence of man, or the higher order of animals; nor do we find, among the secondary strata that have once been dry land, any remains of its former inhabitants, except the bones of enormous reptiles.

Though man and the higher orders of animals could not exist during an epoch of universal disturbance, yet we can discover no reason why many genera and species, particularly of marine animals, that have formerly existed, should be now extinct, unless a change has taken place in the temperature of the globe. Indeed, it is found that many genera and species, which are discovered only in a fossil state in Europe, still inhabit the seas of tropical climates, and some species that were supposed to be entirely extinct, have been recently discovered living in southern latitudes. More important discoveries of this kind may probably be made, as we know little respecting the state of animal existence at the bottom of the sea, or what monsters

“The deep unfathom'd caves of ocean bear.”

“Et quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub æquore pontus.”

I am inclined to believe, that the ichthyosaurus, or some species of a similar genus, is still existing in the present seas. About sixteen years since, a large animal was seen for several summers in the Atlantic, near the coast of the United States, and was called the great sea serpent. Its appearance was frequently announced in the public journals, but the existence of the animal was for some time disbelieved in this country. I am informed by Professor Silliman of Yale College, Connecticut, of whom I made enquiry, that many persons who attested the existence of the sea serpent from their own observations, were so highly respectable, both for intelligence and veracity, that their evidence could not be disputed.

I remember one of the most particular descriptions of the sea serpent was given by an American captain, who saw the animal raise a large portion of its body from the water: he represented it as of great length, and about the bulk of a large water cask; it had paddles somewhat like a turtle, and enormous jaws like the crocodile. This description certainly approaches to, or may be said to correspond with, the ichthyosaurus, of which animal the captain had probably never heard. An animal of the magnitude attributed to the sea serpent would certainly require paddles or fins to impel it swiftly through the water. I very much regret that I am unable to refer to the American paper from which the account was taken, and must be content to direct the attention of future observers to the above statement, should the sea serpent again appear in the Atlantic Ocean.*

* In the American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. II, p. 147-164, may be seen a collection of documents on the subject of the sea serpent; they were compiled by