

2. *CROCODILUS MADAGASCARIENSIS*, Gray, P. Z. S. 1874, p. 145, pl. xxiii.

Madagascar.

B.M.

## 2. PHILAS.

Head elongate, slender, conical. Forehead flat before and between the eyes, with a slight convex narrow ridge in front to the middle of the beak; face rounded on the sides from the central line; nose subcylindrical.

PHILAS JOHNSTONI. (Plate XXVII.)

*Crocodilus johnstoni*, Krefft, MS.

*Crocodilus johnsoni*, Krefft, P. Z. S. 1873, p. 334.

*Tomistoma krefftii*, Gray, MS., *vide* Krefft.

Australia, Queensland, Cardwell (*Johnston, Bloxland, Krefft*).

The head nearly twice and a half as long as broad; specimen 7 feet long.

5. Note on a Gigantic Cephalopod from Conception Bay, Newfoundland. By W. SAVILLE KENT, F.L.S., F.Z.S., some time Assistant in the Natural-History Department of the British Museum, and late Curator of the Brighton Aquarium.

[Received February 17, 1874.]

The 'American Sportsman' for December 6, 1873, for which I am indebted to the Editor for a separate copy sent me, contains a well authenticated account of a huge Cephalopod lately encountered in Conception Bay, Newfoundland, one of the longer arms of the same having been secured and deposited in the St. John's Museum.

The full description of the monster as contributed by the Rev. M. Harvey of St. John's, may be thus condensed\* :—

Two fishermen, while plying their vocation off Great Belle Island, Conception Bay, October 26, 1873, suddenly discovered, at a short distance from them, a dark shapeless mass floating on the surface of the water. Concluding that it was probably part of the cargo of some wrecked vessel, they approached, anticipating a valuable prize, and one of them struck the object with his boat-hook. Upon receiving the shock the dark heap became suddenly animated, and spreading out discovered an intelligent face, with a pair of large prominent ghastly eyes, which seemed to gleam with intense ferocity, the creature at the same time exposing to view, and opening, its parrot-like beak with an apparently hostile and malignant purpose. The men were petrified with terror, and for a moment so fascinated by the horrible sight as to be powerless to stir. Before they had time to recover their presence of mind, the monster, now but a few

\* See also Mr. Harvey's letter to Principal Dawson, reprinted in the 'Annals & Magazine of Natural History' for January 1874.



feet from the boat, suddenly shot out from around its head several long arms of corpse-like fleshiness, grappling with them for the boat and seeking to envelop it in their folds. Only two of these reached the craft, and, owing to their length, went completely over and beyond it. Seizing his hachet with a desperate effort, one of the men succeeded in severing these limbs with a single well-delivered blow; and the creature finding itself worsted, immediately disappeared beneath the waters, leaving in the boat its amputated members as a trophy of the terrible encounter. One of the arms was unfortunately destroyed before its value was known; but the other, when brought to St. John's and examined by the Rev. M. Harvey, was found to measure no less than nineteen feet; and the fisherman who acted as surgeon declares there must have been at least six feet more of this arm left attached to the monster's body. This separated member is described by Mr. Harvey as being livid in colour and pointed at its extremity, where alone it is covered with rows of cartilaginous horny suckers, each about the size of a quarter-dollar. Unfortunately, the fishermen were too much frightened during the short time the adventure lasted to form a reliable opinion of the length of the animal's body; under the influence of terror, they set it down at forty feet, an estimate which, notwithstanding the extraordinary dimensions of the arm secured, must be received as a considerable exaggeration.

Mr. Harvey's supposition that this monster probably belonged to the *Teuthidæ*, or that section of the *Dibranchiate Cephalopoda* including the *Squids* and *Calamaries*, distinguished by the possession of eight sessile arms and two additional tentacula of much greater length, is entirely borne out by the description communicated; and fortunately we are in possession of other substantial evidence which proves beyond doubt the existence of a species of *Calamary* as formidable in point of size as the one just described. In the vaults of the British Museum, in fact, there has been long since preserved a single arm of a huge cephalopod, measuring from one end to the other no less than nine feet; the circumference at its base is eleven inches; and thence it gradually tapers off, terminating in a fine point. The suckers, which cover the whole of the under surface of this arm, are distributed in two alternating rows, numbering from 145 to 150 suckers to each row, those at the base having a diameter of half an inch, and gradually decreasing in size as they approach the further attenuate extremity. No authenticated record of the circumstances attending the capture of this remarkable specimen, or of the locality whence obtained, appears to have been preserved; but it is believed to have come from the South-American coast.

The fact that the suckers of this colossal arm are all pedunculated or attached through the medium of a slender stalk, instead of being sessile as in the *Octopus*, has been already mentioned by myself\* as indicating that the creature belonged to the ten-armed *Teu-*

\* Article on the "Octopus" in the Official Guide-book to the Brighton Aquarium, by W. Saville Kent, then curator, 1st edition, Brighton, 1873, also in 2nd edition since published, with the author's name excised.



thidæ, which, when living, must have possessed two additional tentacula, in all probability at least twice the length of the preserved member. That this last-named specimen again is only one of the shorter arms, is made evident by the disposition of the suckers in two rows throughout its length; and the information now supplied by Mr. Harvey establishes, in a most gratifying manner, the correctness of the conclusions already drawn concerning it. Both these arms, indeed, now under discussion must have appertained to a body of the most closely approximating proportions, and belong probably to one and the same species. The shorter member in the British Museum has evidently been detached close to its base; but at the same time it is reasonable to infer that prior to its exposure to the contracting influences of the spirit, wherein it is now immersed, it measured some two or three additional feet; these added, give a length of precisely half the longer tentacle in the St. John's Museum when perfect, which proportionate dimensions were estimated, while yet unproved, in the reference already given.

Although it does not appear that the body of any Cephalopod possessing arms and tentacles of such huge dimensions as the foregoing has up to the present time been secured for scientific examination and identification, there is yet abundant evidence that such exist. Several well authenticated accounts of these are contained in Gwyn Jeffreys's 'British Conchology,' article Cephalopoda, vol. v. p. 124. One example, stranded on the west coast of Shetland, is reported to have had tentacles measuring 16 feet long, arms of half that length, and a mantle-sac 7 feet long terminated with fins. A sucker of this specimen, the only part preserved, examined by Prof. Allman, was  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch in diameter. Among several monsters cast up on the Danish coast, chronicled by Prof. Steenstrup, one is said to have possessed a body measuring 21 feet, and tentacles 18, or a total length of 39 feet. This specimen is referred by its chronicler to a species of *Architeuthis*, his *A. dux*, two allied forms receiving from the same authority the provisional title of *Architeuthis monachus*. Unfortunately, however, no portions of these animals, sufficient for establishing a scientific diagnosis, or for the purposes of positive reidentification, appear to have been preserved. The following reliable account, which has already appeared in many recent natural-history treatises, may be accepted as additional testimony in proof of the existence of true ocean monsters:—On the 30th of November, 1861, about 20 miles to the north-east of Teneriffe, the French dispatch-boat 'Alecton,' Captain Bouyer, encountered a huge Cephalopod floating, apparently exhausted, on the surface of the water. The endeavour was immediately made to effect its capture, shots being fired at and harpoons plunged into it without any result, the latter being unable to take any hold in its soft yielding flesh. In the end a running noose was successfully cast over the creature's tail; but on endeavouring to haul it on board, the rope cut through the animal's body, completely severing the tail-piece, which was drawn on deck, the remaining portion at the same time slowly sinking away from view in the depths of the ocean. This



adventure lasted fully three hours, an interval which sufficed for one of the officers on board, Monsieur Rodolphe, to make a hasty sketch of the scene, a *fac simile* of which is represented in the admirable marine text-book 'Das Meer,' lately published in Berlin by Dr. Schleider. The commander of the ship, Captain Bouyer, and Consul Sabin Berthelot, then with him, additionally testify to the gigantic size of this creature, to the body alone of which they assigned a length of from 15 to 18 feet, the arms, according to the sketch, measuring something less. Satisfied as to the truth of this account, Crosse and Fischer have conferred upon this animal the name of *Loligo bouyeri*. No portion of this last example having been preserved; the same difficulty is attached to the determining of its exact specific identity with any other form encountered before or since, as seems to apply to Prof. Steenstrup's *Architeuthis monachus* and *A. dux*.

The two fragments now preserved in the British and St. John's Museums, in fact, apparently constitute the only substantial material at present available to work upon; and of the two, that obtained for the latter institution is calculated to prove the more important. Especial value attaches itself to the form and mode of distribution of the suckers on the clubbed extremity of the two longer tentacles; and Mr. Harvey will render a great service to science by making a second careful examination and report in this direction on the example that has lately passed through his hands. In his brief account already given, no mention is made of horny *uncini* or claws in association with these suckers, a fact which suffices to indicate that the animal must not be classed with *Onychoteuthis*, *Euoploteuthis*\*, or other of the armed Calamaries, but rather with *Loligo*, *Sepioteuthis*, and its allies, having only simple suckers. The evidence supplied by the shorter arm preserved in the British Museum points to a similar conclusion.

The evidence already adduced seeming to indicate that this mighty Cephalopod will scarcely be found, upon more intimate acquaintance, to accord sufficiently with *Loligo* proper as to be placed in the same genus, I propose, provisionally, to create for it the new generic title of *Megaloteuthis* (*megalos*, huge; and *teuthis*, a calamary), and to further distinguish the particular species, of which there is now sufficient material for reidentification in the tentacle deposited in the St. John's Museum, as *Megaloteuthis harveyi*, in grateful acknowledgment of the source to which we are indebted for this most interesting and important accession to our previous knowledge of these formidable Mollusca.

#### ADDENDA.

Since the composition of the foregoing, an interesting article corroborating the Rev. Mr. Harvey's account, and furnishing additional

\* In the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons is an arm of a species of this genus, *E. unguiculata*, found by Banks and Solander during Cook's first voyage, supposed to have been 6 feet long when perfect. The natives of the Polynesian Islands, who dive for shellfish, have a well-founded dread of these formidable animals. (*Owen*.)



evidence of similar monsters encountered in the vicinity of Newfoundland, has appeared in the pages of 'Appleton's Journal' for January 31, 1874. Among the latter the Rev. M. Gabriel has stated that in the winter of 1870-71 two entire Cuttlefish were stranded on the beach near Lamalien, which measured respectively forty and forty-seven feet; while more recently an example became entangled in a herring-net near Logie Bay, whose body is said to have measured nine feet, the shorter arms six feet, and the two longer tentacula twenty-two feet. Steps are reported to have been taken to preserve this last-named specimen. In connexion with the St.-John's tentacle, a rough woodcut has been published in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' for January last; and in the more minute description given by Mr. Harvey in a letter to Principal Dawson, there reprinted, the form and arrangement of the suckers at its clubbed extremity are described. These consist, in the first place, of a double row of very large suckers, measuring each  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter, with twelve suckers to each row, occupying the centre of the club-shaped expansion; supplementing each extremity of this double row is a cluster of smaller suckers, the group at the proximal end containing fifty, and that at the distal one as many as seventy of these. The smaller suckers are further distinguished from the larger ones by their denticulated edges, those of the latter being smooth. The additional characters furnished by this more complete account will be of high importance for further identification, and serve to distinguish this animal from its nearest allies *Loligo* or *Ommatostrephus*, in which the tentacular club is armed with four rows of suckers.

We await, however, still fuller details before attaching a positive diagnosis.

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March 17, 1874.

Professor Newton, F.R.S., V.P., in the Chair.

The Secretary called the attention of the Meeting to an important addition that had been made to the Society's Menagerie since the last Meeting. On the 7th inst. the Council had purchased of Messrs. Cross and Jamrach, for the sum of £800, a young male Javan Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*)\* imported from Batavia.

This was believed to be the first example of this Rhinoceros that had ever been brought alive to Europe, although Mr. Blyth (J. A. S. B. xxxi. p. 152) had put forward a theory that one of the Indian Rhinoceroses exhibited in England some time since had belonged to this species.

This addition raised the representatives of the genus *Rhinoceros* in the Society's Gardens to four in number, viz. *Rh. unicornis*, *Rh.*

\* The specific term *sondaicus* of Desmarest (Mamm. p. 399, 1820) appears to be the earliest for this species. In 1824 *javanicus* was published by Geoffroy St.-Hilaire and Frederick Cuvier in the Hist. Nat. des Mamm. pl. 309, and was subsequently adopted by Cuvier in his 'Règne Animal,' by Schreber, and by other authors.



Saville-Kent, William. 1874. "Note of a gigantic Cephalopod from Conception Bay, Newfoundland." *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London* 1874, 178–182.

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