

and horse to raise a cartful of farm stuff for market, and that the same man and horse lose a day standing in the market to sell it; it is quite clear that the public must pay two days wages of the man and horse: whereas, if it were brought in the morning to a huckster, the farmer or his man might be back at breakfast, only losing a quarter of a day; and the huckster, having no horse to feed, and having a great variety of wares upon which to attend, would do the remaining part of the business much more cheaply. And there is certainly no more reason to doubt that the ordinary law of competition will operate in the reduction of profits to a barely living rate, in the case of hucksters, than in any other business.

With regard to economy, then, we firmly believe the law against forestalling to be injurious to all the parties concerned. It prevents the farmer and his horse from making the most of their time; it prevents the increase in numbers and prosperity of a worthy and important class of citizens, namely, hucksters, pouterers, green grocers, etc.; and it makes the public actually pay dearer for supplies than they would do, were the natural division of labour permitted.

But the case does not rest here. By far the most important objection remains behind. The law is eminently immoral in its tendency and results. The farmer who stands idling away a day in the market, surrounded by dram shops, and continually meeting some old acquaintance, is under peculiar temptations to drink; and how often does he go home, not only bereft of a considerable portion of his dearly earned market money, but of a considerable portion of his senses and character also! And when he arrives in such a state, it indeed he does arrive safely, what an influence must his condition have upon his family! Neither is the case mended if the farmer send his hired man or his son in his stead; either or both are liable, nay, almost certain, to be debauched. And we are fully persuaded that it is to this most unjust and iniquitous law, that a great deal of the drunkenness which, to a sad extent, characterises our agricultural population, is attributable.

We might say much more about the inutility of the law, and show that the chief towns of Scotland get on perfectly well without it, or indeed without market places at all, there being a butcher's shop in almost every street, with, generally speaking, the green grocer for a near neighbour: so that instead of the butcher of the St. Antoine Suburbs, for instance, and his customers, also perhaps of the same suburbs, having to travel half a mile each before the one can obtain a leg of mutton from the other, they may do it on the spot. We might, we say, show these things; but, as they would not be listened to, we may as well save the time and space.

It is not, of course, our object to recommend that farmers should be compelled to sell their stuff to hucksters. As many as chose should have every opportunity and convenience for selling it themselves. All that we contend for is, that they should not be prevented from selling to hucksters if they find it to their advantage; and that hucksters should not be prevented from buying where, when, and how they may see fit.

WONDERS OF THE ANCIENT DEEP.

From Ansted's "Ancient World, or Picturesque Sketches of Creation."

THE MEGALICHTHYS.

The *megalichthys* [from two Greek words, signifying great fish,] was an animal of large size, and seems also to have been of great strength. Its head was large, and the gape of the jaws enormous; the jaws themselves powerful, and provided with a range of most formidable teeth, of which some of enormous size projected far beyond the rest, as is the case with the crocodile. The dimensions to which the animal must have attained may be imagined when it is known that these teeth have been found measuring four inches in length, and nearly two inches broad at the base, a size rarely if ever met with even in the largest reptiles. The body, covered with scales of corresponding magnitude (sometimes five inches in diameter,) was well shaped for swimming, being formed upon a robust bony skeleton, and provided with an extremely large and powerful tail, enabling it to advance with extreme rapidity. It must have been eminently carnivorous, and capable of pursuing and taking almost any living creature among its contemporaries.

THE PLESIOSAURUS.

Imagine one of these monstrous animals, a *plesiosaurus*, some sixteen or twenty feet long, with a small wedge-shaped crocodilian head, a long arched serpent-like neck, a short compact body, provided with four large and powerful paddles, almost developed into hands; an animal not covered with brilliant scales, but with a black slimy skin. Imagine, for a moment, this creature slowly emerging from the muddy banks, and half walking, half creeping along, making its way towards the nearest water. Arrived at the water, we can understand from its structure that it was likely to exhibit greater energy. Unlike the crocodile tribe, however, in all its proportions, it must have been equally dissimilar in habit. Perhaps, instead of

concealing itself in mud or among rushes, it would swim at once boldly and directly to the attack. Its enormous neck stretched out to its full length, and its tail acting as a rudder, the powerful and frequent strokes of its four large paddles would at once give it an impulse, sending it through the water at a very rapid rate. When within reach of its prey, we may almost fancy that we see it drawing back its long neck as it depressed its body in the water, until the strength of the muscular apparatus with which this neck was provided, and the great additional impetus given by the rapid advance of the animal, would combine to produce a stroke from the pointed head which few living animals could resist. The fishes, including perhaps even the sharks, the larger eel-fish, and innumerable inhabitants of the sea, would fall an easy prey to this monster.

The most striking and manifest peculiarity in the *plesiosaurus* consists in the enormous length of the neck, which, in some species, not only exceeds in absolute dimensions, but also in its proportion to the size of the animal, that of the longest-necked quadruped or bird. But the perfect mobility of this neck, of which we may form an idea by the number of joints it possesses, was no less remarkable. The giraffe, the longest-necked quadruped we are acquainted with, has only seven vertebrae of the neck, not differing in this respect from the other mammals; the swan, the longest-necked bird, has twenty-three; but the *plesiosaurus* is known, from some admirably preserved specimens, to have had upwards of thirty, and perhaps as many as forty. In its proportions, the neck in one species measured four times the length of the head, and actually exceeds the entire length of the body and tail. It was apparently thick and muscular near the body, but gradually became slender towards the head, which was small, and sometimes singularly disproportioned in size to the other parts of the animal.

The *plesiosaurus* was highly carnivorous in its habits, and no doubt fed indiscriminately on whatever came within reach, whether living or dead. Its powers of locomotion in the water were great, and its strength must have been formidable; but it had an enemy in the *ichthyosaurus*, from which there was probably little chance of escape. We have good reason to suppose that it could move about on shore, and it probably did so with greater facility than the seal or walrus; but it is not likely that it resorted frequently to the land, since the sea appears to have been its more congenial habitat.

THE ICHTHYOSAURUS.

The animal just mentioned as the fierce and powerful enemy of the *plesiosaurus*, which was itself a voracious reptile attaining a length of from ten to thirty feet, belongs unquestionably to a most remarkable and anomalous genus, but departed, perhaps, much less considerably than the other from the present external form of marine animals. With the exception of a larger head, and paddles somewhat more developed, it was not very unlike the porpoise in its appearance, but it was a true reptile, adapted for constant residence in the sea, and in that respect claims comparison as being the ancient analogue and representative of the great existing tribe of marine mammalia, of which the whale is perhaps the best known type. * * *

But now let us see what goes on in the deeper abysses of the ocean, where a free space is given for the operations of that fiercely carnivorous marine reptile, the *ichthyosaurus*. Prowling about at a great depth, where the reptilian structure of its lungs and the bony apparatus of the ribs would allow it to remain for a long time without coming to the air to breathe, we may fancy we see this strange animal, with its enormous eyes directed upwards, and glaring like globes of fire; its length is some thirty or forty feet, its head being six or eight feet long; and it has paddles and a tail like a shark; its whole energies are fixed on what is going on above, where the *plesiosaurus* or some giant shark is seen devouring its prey. Suddenly, striking with its short but compact paddles, and obtaining a powerful impetus by flapping its large tail, the monster darts through the water at a rate which the eye can scarcely follow towards the surface. The vast jaws, lined with formidable rows of teeth, soon open wide to their full extent: the object of attack is approached—is overtaken. With a motion quicker than thought the jaws are snapped together, and the work is done. The monster becoming gorged, floats languidly near the surface, with a portion of the top of its head and its nostrils visible, like an island covered with black mud, above the water.