

SEA SERPENT.*

THIS very extraordinary creature, which has lately so much excited the curiosity of every class of people in this country, has, at length, assumed a scientific rank in the grade of animals. For this, we are indebted to the persevering industry and ingenious researches of that respectable institution, the *New-England Linnæan Society*, who have conferred a lasting obligation on the scientific world, by this valuable deposit in the archives of knowledge. From a careful perusal of the documents supplied by the committee of this institution, little doubt remains, that this mammoth prodigy properly belongs to the class of the *Amphibia* order of Serpents; but its generic characters are entirely new. It, therefore, justly claims an independent rank in zoology. From this circumstance, the committee have very properly denominated this enormous reptile the *SCOLIOPHIS ATLANTICUS*. They were induced to confer that name upon it, from a consideration of the flexuous structure of the spine, which is very remarkable and different from that of all animals hitherto known. We shall, therefore, introduce this creature, under the generic formula, which the committee have devised, after making some prefatory observations.

The natural history of this creature is, of course, but little known. It appears to be migratory and to pursue the multitudes of small fish, such as mackerel, herring, &c. upon which, without doubt, it feeds, and it is highly probable, that it pursues them to their annual retreats, within the arctic regions. From circumstances, it appears, that the object of feeding is not its only inducement to range within the temperate latitudes; but that of breeding. Whether it be viviparous, or oviparous. or whether it pro-

* This article is compiled from a work lately published in Philadelphia, entitled, "*The new and complete Universal Natural history of all the most remarkable quadrupeds, birds, fishes, reptiles, and insects in the known world, &c.*" from the last London edition of J. MACLOD, Esq. much improved and enlarged by BENJAMIN MAYO. We mention this as a valuable and highly interesting publication and as one which ought to be in the possession of every young person, who is desirous of obtaining a competent knowledge in that most delightful branch of study NATURAL HISTORY. Indeed the aged may find many things in this book, which will afford them both amusement and instruction.