Great Western. M. Schlegel characterizes the statement as an “ assertion que je puis contredire avec certitude.” Be­lieving that there are more things in heaven and earth than are “ dream’t of in our philosophy,” and desiring to bear in mind the sentiment of the inspired apostle, that “ if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know,” we shall content ourselves by stating that sea-serpents have not yet been observed in the Atlantic Ocean. M. Schlegel’s researches have led him to believe that they are confined “ aux mers intertropicales, ou voisines des tropiques, comprises entre le 90me et les 230me degrés de longit. or. du méridien de Ferro.”@@1 We shall here state the chief of the actual localities. Several species were received by Dr Russel from among the nu­merous islands called Sunderabunds, which form the delta of the Ganges. The same author likewise obtained many from different points along the coast of Coromandel. Sir Stamford Raffles mentions three species which frequent the coasts of Sumatra.@@9 The Dutch voyagers have observed only a single species on the coast of Java, but they have met with several among the Moluccas, near Timor, Banda, and the shores of New Guinea Dr Strauss transmitted two species from the Celebes. M. Von Siebold observed them to abound in the China Sea, and met with many in the course of his passage from Java to Japan, from the region of the equator as far north as the 27th degree. Eschholtz has incidentally observed,@@3 that the fishermen of the Phi­lippine Islands capture *Acrochordus fasciatus* in the Bay of Manilla, and that this reptile cannot move upon the land. Now it so happens that the Acrochordi correctly so called never inhabit the sea ; and it may therefore be inferred that the observer last named had in view, not an *Acrochordus,* but a sea-snake or *Hydrophis.* It is long since Dampier told us of those which he saw along the western shores of New Holland ;@@4 as did afterwards Sir Jo­**seph** Banks along the eastern coast, from the 20th to the 10th degree of north latitude. Forster, as Schneider has recorded, found *Hyd. pelamys* abundant near Otaheite.

The habits of these reptiles are indicated here and there by different writers. Dr Russel describes their aquatic movements as active and elegant, but they have scarcely any locomotive power on land, and speedily die when either brought ashore or placed in fresh water. He found in the abdomen of a female Hydrophis nine perfectly formed young, each of which was enclosed in an egg or envelope, from which (the matured condition) it may be inferred that they are viviparous. It would also seem that their manners are milder than those of the generality of poisonous species. Dr Russel, at least, assures us in regard to *Hyd. gracilis,* that no provocation would induce it to bite any object pre­sented to it. Neither could M. Lesson succeed in his dis­interested attempts to make *Hyd. pelamys* wound any poul­try, though he kindly put them together alive into a copper bathing tub.@@5 The observations received from M. Von Siebold by M. Schlegel confirm the belief of other naturalists, that these reptiles, though assuredly dangerous from their poisonous qualities, are not of a highly ferocious nature. The former traveller fell in with vast numbers while sailing from Batavia to Japan, all of the small species, elsewhere so frequent and widely spread, known to naturalists by the specific name of *pelamys.* Their movements were by no means rapid, although they glided through the water with grace and activity, raising their heads from time to time above the waves, for the purpose probably of respiration. Their motion is produced and directed by an action of the tail, accompanied by a lateral and undulating movement

of the other parts of the body. They were easily enough entrapped in wooden buckets, and glided through the sai­lors’ hands without attempting to bite them,—the said sailors having probably been previously informed that they were eels. “ Le Professeur Reinwardt,” says Schlegel, “confirme ce que M. von Siebold rapporte relativement au caractère doux et tranquille de ces animaux.”@@8 We cannot, however, help thinking that this alleged sweetness of temper and tran­quillity are in some measure inconsistent with the cases of the native woman and Lascar already reported in our in­troductory observations. The comparatively slow move­ments also do not accord with what we are elsewhere in­formed by M. Lesson. “ Le 27 Juillet,” says that natu­ralist, “ par une journée brûlante, nous fûmes pris de calme sur les côtes de la Nouvelle Guinée. De nombreux ser­pens marins passèrent le long de la corvette, et un embar­cation que le capitaine fit mettre à la mer nous permit de les chasser. Nous atteignîmes après de longues pursuites une Pelamide, dont l’agilité était extrème, et les mouvemens de natation des plus rapides.”@@7

We owe some interesting observations on the manners of these marine serpents to M. Peron,@@8 although it may be doubted whether that voyager did not occasionally take his notes from too great a distance, especially in reference to size and colour. No other credible author has ever de­scribed any of these species as attaining to so great a length as twelve feet ; the usual dimensions, we may here observe, varying from two and a half to five feet. However, M. Peron describes those he saw as gliding lightly in great numbers on the surface of the sea, and waging destruc­tive war against a shoal of small herrings, which fled pre­cipitately towards deeper water. The haunts of these snakes are by no means confined to the shallow shores, or even the vicinity of continents or islands, for they are often met with many hundred miles from land. On open­ing their stomach, our navigator found it filled with small fish, and various marine crustacea ; but the reptiles them­selves became the frequent prey of sharks, in the interior of which their half-digested remains were often found. It naturally became a subject of surprise, that creatures so light and active should so often fall victims to an enemy of such weight and sluggishness ; but after more lengthened observation, a peculiarity in the habits of the former was thought sufficient to account for their capture. These ser­pents were often seen as if asleep, and floating on the waves, and so profound was their repose, that a large ves­sel, “ with all its bravery on,” might pass close by without their being disturbed by its surging prow, its huge furrow, or the loud voices of the garrulous sailors ( Frenchmen, of course). M. Peron supposes that it is in this state of le­thargy that the lazy sharks swallow them at their leisure. As to the cause of the torpor itself, he naturally enough suggests that it may arise, as among the terrestrial races, from repletion, and the indolence indulged in by all ser­pents during the digestive process. “ Ces reptiles,” he adds, “ nagent et plongent avec une égale facilité : souvent à l’instant même où nous croyons pouvoir les saisir avec nos filets, ils disparaissaient à nos yeux ; et, s’enfonçant à de grandes profondeurs sous les flots, ils restaient une demiheure et plus sans remonter à leur surface, ou ne parais­saient qu’à de trés-grandes distances du point où nous les avions vus plonger.”@@9

The general ground-colour of the majority of these rep­tiles is yellowish, varying towards green, blue, or white, and often relieved by blackish rings, or broad lozenge­shaped spots, disposed transversely along the dorsal re-

*@@@1 Physiog. des Serpents,* ii. p. 491.

*@@@’ Phil. Trans,* xiii. part ii. p. 334.

@@@3 ln Kotzebue’s *Neue Reise, Anh.* p. 32.

*@@@4 Vayayes,* iv. p. 107 and 113.

*@@@a Coquille,* ii. p. 58.

*@@@6 Physiοg.* ii. g. 493.

*@@@7 Loc. eit,*

*@@@• Voyaye,* p. 105 and 129. *4 Loc. cit.*

*@@@9 Loc. cit.*